

Open Academy Update 16 April 2021

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

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the newsletter this week.

In it you will find all of our usual updates and information and this week there is some key information regarding the external examination grading processes we will be using this year.

It is great to be back at the start of a term with everyone in and working. Yes, things are not quite as normal yet. The ventilation requirements have meant it has been pretty fresh in the academy this week, but face coverings are being observed incredibly well by all and all the rest of the COVID response change is now second nature.

Attendance has been great this week, once again above average, and home testing is being completed by the vast majority of your children as we return which is another reassuring sign, so with Hubs back in full swing now, it really does feel like this time we are now back for good.

I will mention at this point the amazing lockdown efforts last term made by many students but exemplified by Rebecca Shapcott in Year 7, whose folder of work representing all of the work she completed during lockdown 3, shows just what a comprehensive curriculum offer was available last term, not to mention the great dedication on her part to get it all done!

Year 11 and Year 13 Assessment Grades

I have asked Mr Ward to write to Year 11 and 13 today (see attached letter and [link](#)) to clarify the situation as regards assessment grades this year. The guidance is so late and piecemeal that it will take us a few more days to clarify exactly how things will work even for staff, so we may have sent a few mixed messages this week already which I would like to apologise for.

The key thing is to read the attached letter. It gives full and clear details of how we will be approaching assessments this year. Please be reassured that as this situation crystallises, we will do all we can to ensure your child gets the grades they deserve.

I will leave it with the summary from the letter:

- We are doing all we can to help your child get the grades they deserve.
- We do not intend to replace GCSEs with our own exam series as such. Mini exams and tests along with other information will add to the picture for each subject.
- The evidence used may vary from subject to subject depending upon the assessment evidence that each already holds.
- If you have any worries, please contact Mr Ward on the email address below and I will answer any questions you may have Kevin.Ward@Open-Academy.org.uk

Alongside the assessment process we will be doing all we can to ensure that your child has a clear next step lined up for the forthcoming academic year and we have some exciting plans for supporting the transition of Year 11 and 13 on to their next steps, which we will be sharing in the coming weeks.

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. PSHE and Skills for Life

Just a reminder that students will be taking part in lessons which will focus on the relationships and sex education (RSE) aspect of our Skills for Life programme. For more details about our PSHE curriculum, you can visit the school's website:

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

All PSHE/SKL 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-AYQqaPv6megkG6KEjhhCinVBUSDY0jIUOTIwOTRGNFJJTVRZSDdTREo5OVEyMFISVi4u>

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

Mrs Wicks

Teacher - Business and subject lead for PSHE/SKL

2. School Meals

We have been informed by Aspens, our catering supplier, that with effect from Monday, 19 April the price of a meal deal is increasing from £2.30 to £2.35.

Mrs Appleby

Business Manager

3. PE Kits

As you may now know, our school uniform shop is shortly moving online, making it easier to purchase items for your son/daughter.

The PE department are also adding our kit to the same online shop. This will coincide with a change to our current PE kit and options available.

We have decided to change our PE kit for the coming year for many beneficial factors, including:

- Easier cleaning and drying, as the current white polo shirts get dirty very easily and can be more difficult to keep clean. Especially during winter.

- The thinner, black polo will be more user friendly for students and will use a training wear material, which supports air flow during exercise.
- The academy logo on the front will promote a greater sense of pride and togetherness when competing against other schools in sporting events.
- We will be in line with many other local schools in having our own designated PE kit.

To help support you as parents/carers, the following items can be purchased from our new online shop. However, the black, embroidered polo top will be the only compulsory item. All other kit can be purchased from elsewhere but must be sportswear and black. Our quarter zip, long sleeved top will not be embroidered but will be cheaper to purchase than most other clothing providers.

From September 2021, our PE kit will consist of:

1. Black Open Academy polo shirt, embroidered with the academy logo.
2. Black shorts/tracksuit bottoms.

Optional items (available from our online shop)

1. Black quarter-zip, long sleeved tops (not embroidered)
2. Sports leggings (must be sports leggings/ training wear and black).

Please see the black polo top in the image, with pricing for each item below:

Polo top – 9-11 years old and 12-13 years old £9.75

Polo top – Small, Medium, Large, XL and XXL £11.75

We have a small selection of the polo tops to view in the academy, in order to purchase the correct size.



Mr Richardson
Teacher

4. Year 7 News

Welcome back! It has been a great first week for the Year 7s. The students have settled back into the daily routine, complying with the current Covid restrictions in place. Behaviour has been good with lots of achievement points being issued.

Mobile phones should be switched off and out of sight. Students have been spoken to as a year group. If a student needs to contact a parent they should speak to the year team. Please can parents/carers reinforce this message at home.

Uniform - all students should be wearing correct uniform in line with the academy's uniform policy. This can be found on our website. No hoodies, jeans or leggings are not to be worn, skirts should be knee length. If for any reason a student cannot wear the correct uniform, parents/carers should contact the year team.

Learning Hubs commenced this week for Year 7s. They are run Monday to Thursday after school. The Hubs have been set up following the governments expectation that all students need to catch up on any work missed in lockdown. Students who have work outstanding have been asked to Hub sessions. The students asked to attend the sessions will be reviewed and regularly updated over the next few weeks. Some students only missed a little of the work, so will catch up quicker. Other students may be asked to attend if it is felt they need extra support.

In addition to the Hubs, the next knowledge organiser has been issued to the year group today. This contains the key content of all topics being taught this half term. Homework and assessments are based around the topics and is produced to support the learning in school.

Shout outs for this week: Hallie Chandler, Troy Notley and Charlie Mann for receiving the highest achievement points of the week. Riley Daniels – Miss Ling Reading, being an absolute star in reading. Not only did he read wonderfully, but he was also very supportive to others in the group.

The Tutor group with the highest achievement points this week is I7 Mr Brown's form. Congratulations Mr Brown and all of I7.

Open Voice will be up and running over the next few weeks. We will be asking students to focus on anti-bullying, looking at ways to be supportive to each other continuing the #bekind theme we touched on before the end of last term.

Finally, a big thank you to parents/carers for your continued support returning to school, we are really impressed with how the students have engaged and the quality of the work being produced. We hope you all have a relaxing weekend.

Mrs Hewitt-Coleman - Head of Year 7

Mrs Lamb and Miss Whitwood – Assistant Heads of Year 7

5. Year 8 News

A mixed bag in terms of achievement and attendance this week which can partially be forgiven for our first full week back in lessons after the Easter break and lockdown 3, plus the exhaustion of being back in routine can bring. There are a couple of things to note. Firstly, our year group attendance. Whilst we were the leaders back in the Autumn term, we've fallen quite low in our numbers and are sitting at 94%. We understand that everyone is still being very cautious around illnesses of any kind, but this is a crucial time for our Year 8 students in terms of getting back on track with their academic progress and we would appreciate your support in this.

Secondly, we have seen a number of cases of verbal bullying and property damage (using mask strings to cut into chairs) from our students this week which is disappointing and concerning. We entrust our students to treat others and our school with the respect they should expect to be treated with and Mrs Smith and I have spent a lot of time this week investigating various incidents that could have been avoided with self-discipline and kindness for others. The long absence from school has made some students forget that they come here primarily to learn and we would again appreciate your support in reminding pupils of our core values by maybe offering a word or two of advice about their conduct in school. This particularly applies to students who are receiving regular detentions.

However, the actions of the few shouldn't overshadow the achievement of the many so I would like to congratulate the following students on excellent work and effort this week: Ella Ramm, Ashton Taylor, Leah-Louise Lovett, Scarlet Bush, Joel Walker, Deagan Walker, Andrew Coelho and Ariya Rashid. Praise postcards should be arriving with you shortly! The entire year group has collectively earned 636 achievement points with a lot of those for LEARNT behaviour so well done!

Lastly, a final note about uniform. We are still seeing students arrive in leggings, trainers or incredibly short skirts/ties. Taking pride in our uniform makes for a better attitude towards learning and so if you have problems with obtaining or funding for proper school uniform, please contact the Year 8 office. Phone calls home from tutors will be happening from next week onwards for any cases of incorrect uniform.

Wishing you a relaxing weekend.

Miss Lines – Head of Year 8

Mrs Smith – Assistant Heads of Year 8

6. Year 9 News

Welcome back to the summer term, though it doesn't feel much like summer at the moment. It's been good to have everyone back and fingers crossed we get through a whole term again.

Our top ten achieving students this week are: Georgina Barnes, Lucy Birkett, James Hoyer, Jayden Muzembe, Seazyn Robins, Dalia Rosca, Toby Thompson, Zac Duckett, James Self and Joshua Tidd. Well done to you all.

Our praise club members this week are: Isla Gardner, Kelsey Holman, Ryan Howes and Teyla Young. Congratulations for consistently working hard and a great attitude to school life.

The sports project will commence next Thursday after school for the sports leaders. Library club commences next week too at lunchtime and after school (please check the library section of this newsletter).

If your child hasn't handed in their options form yet please return them as soon as possible.

Hubs after school commenced last week. Please remind your child to attend if they have a hub timetabled for them. We have detailed below Mr Ward's explanation of the hubs - 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 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 completed sufficient work 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.

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

7. Year 10 News

It's been a great first week back after the Easter holidays and it's been good to see the students return with positivity and ready to learn. Thank you for your continued support with ensuring students are in correct uniform, it sets such a good tone for the students when they arrive to school smart and this in turn contributes to a mindset for effective learning.

We've seen a really successful start to our summer Hub sessions, these are invaluable in supporting students with any work they may have missed during lockdown and will really help with building confidence and knowledge ahead of Year 11. If you have any queries around Hub sessions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mrs Roberts.

Our Year 10 tutor sessions are focusing on reading and oracy over the coming term, so students should be arriving to school every day with a reading book.

Well done to our top 5 achievement point students this week: Alex Money 52, Jack Teasdale 51, Jessica Ramm 50, Izzy Taylor 50, and Freddie Goodson 10. Keep up the good work!

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

8. Year 11 News

A heart felt 'well done!' for Year 11 returning to lessons this week. They have come back into school, worked hard, been calm and very mature in their attitude towards their learning. There has been a slight decrease in the number of students attending Hub. I appreciate that some students feel they are not doing exams and so do not need to attend, however staff are using Hub sessions to recap work and prepare students for the coming assessments.

There has been a lot of confusion about how teachers will assess grades and different schools are taking different approaches. I realise that some students have been anxious about the lack of a formal assessment timetable. The reason for this is to allow the class teacher flexibility in planning the assessments to maximise student performance. We will have assessment windows of time. Teachers will prepare students for their assessment, informing them of the focus of the assessment and the assessment method, e.g. written verbal, practical.

Students will have more than one assessment window, this therefore allows students to prepare for and be assessed in different topics and in a variety of ways. Students' strongest work will then be used as the evidence to produce their grade. Grades given by the class teacher will then be verified by a chain of staff before being entered to ensure moderation and fairness.

If you have any questions please contact Mrs Pearsall by phone or email ruth.pearsall@open-academy.org.uk

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

9. Sixth Form News

Welcome back after a frankly bizarre (weather wise) Easter. We had every weather possible! These two pictures were taken on one day....10 minutes apart!



Hub

Ms Davies emails students each week to let them know if they are in the Hub for that week. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that they are checking their Open Academy email on a daily basis as

the majority of communication from teaching staff will be via this medium. Unfortunately, we had a number of students missing Hub this week, so please make sure that you are attending as a register will be taken.

Private Study

As before, it is really important that students are using private study periods efficiently. Of course, you can also use this time to chat with friends and have a catch up, but the majority of your time should be spent catching up on work. There should be no one that has “nothing to do”, and if you feel that you fall into this category of people, please come and speak to me immediately.

Exams

Both Year 12 and 13 will be completing assessments in the coming weeks. Please make sure that you are speaking to your individual subject teachers so that you know the date that these will take place and the content that you need to be revising for.

Ex Students

It was lovely last week to hear from ex Open Academy student Daniel Mattyasovsky. After Year 11, Danny joined the Football Academy. Despite not being the most academically abled student, Danny always worked hard and persevered to do really well while at Open Academy. He is now studying in America and wrote this:

“Life in the USA is very fun but very demanding. With uni and the sports I’m doing I have to wake up at 4:30 am ready for trainings and lectures and I don’t come home until 6-7pm. But at the weekends we have fun!

I’m studying medicine and hoping to go to med school after. Surprisingly I’m top of my class and have had a couple presidential honours and was named All American for academics and sports last year. I’m still trying to play football and I am also on the sprint team.

But I’ve just been enjoying it, it’s super fun and I travel a lot”



We are SUPER proud of Danny!

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

10. Careers

Our Sector of the Month for April is ‘Sales and Retail’. This is a very broad area which many of our students will already have some knowledge or experience of, but actually covers so much more than just ‘working in a shop’. For example, students interested in product development, visual arts, recruitment or finance could very well find themselves working in a retail or marketing environment and there is a huge potential for both ‘creative’ and ‘analytical’ strengths. In addition, the effects of the pandemic have highlighted the power of digital marketing and social media influence on our purchasing habits and this is a growth area for future career opportunities. An overview of the sector can be found at:

<https://www.icanbea.org.uk/app/explore/industries/sales-retail-34/>

More detailed information on the wide variety of careers can be found on the Unifrog ‘Student’ Home page by searching the ‘Careers Library’ with a keyword such as ‘retail’, ‘marketing’ or ‘sales’. Any parents who have experience of this sector and would like to share their experiences with students (a blog or short video would be ideal) please contact Caroline Davies, Careers Facilitator at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk

All Open Academy students now have access to our fantastic careers information platform Unifrog. Logging in via www.unifrog.org is easy with an Open Academy email address and by setting a personalised password. Please take a moment to have a look at the website with your child and explore what Unifrog has to offer. It contains a wealth of information on just about any career path/job interest or course you might think of and also contains useful guidance on study skills, making applications and managing well-being. Parents who are interested in having their own login should contact Caroline Davies (see email address above) and this can be easily arranged.

The Spring schedule for 'Speakers for Schools' talks is now available at:

<https://www.speakersforschools.org/inspiration/vtalks/upcoming-vtalks/>

Ms Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

11. Library News

Do you have a book in your bag?

All students should have a reading book as part of their school equipment. Students are welcome to bring books in from home or borrow a book from the school library. Remember to check before you leave for school in the morning - do you have a book in your bag? Make sure you bring this in every day!

The Carnegie Book Award and Greenaway Art Competition

Calling all book lovers. Sign up now to take part in the Carnegie Book Award Shadowing Scheme. Read the books nominated for this year's Carnegie Book Award, share your opinions with other readers across the country, and finally vote for your favourite. Please see the poster attached with details about how you can take part. More information about the award can be found here:

<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/>

Students should speak to me if they are interested in taking part.

Do you love Art? We are now accepting entries for the Greenaway Gallery Competition. For this competition you must create a piece of art-work inspired by the Greenaway Book Award shortlist which highlights books that include outstanding illustrations. Students can view these books in the library and have until the end of term (Friday, 28 May) to submit their entries.

Students are welcome to come to the library after school (on their designated year group days) if they require the use of school art supplies to create their entry. Please see the attached poster for full details.

After-School Clubs

The library is open after school from 3-4pm. If your child would like to attend, we ask that please sign up in advance using this form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/hJadVnvmb>

Manga Club will be taking place on Monday (for years 8 and 9) and Friday (for year 7) next week.

If you have any questions or would like any individual support regarding reading, please do get in touch.

Miss Ling
Librarian

12. Attendance

Year Group 12	90.83%
Year Group 13	90.94%
Year Group 7	96.43%
Year Group 8	94.58%
Year Group 9	94.72%
Year Group 10	94.26%
Year Group 11	86.07%

Attendance lottery – many congratulations to Reece Attwater, tutor group: I8RPH, who wins a £5 Amazon voucher for having 100% attendance for week ending 26 March 2021. Well done Reece!

For week 22 March 2021 to 26 March 2021, we had an amazing 444 students who achieved 100% attendance from Years 7 to 11. We also had 39 students in our Sixth Form who also achieved 100% attendance. Well done to all those students.



Absent from the Academy

If your son/daughter is ill and is unable to attend school, please contact the academy on 01603 481640 or alternatively you can contact us on our email address for absences:

student.absence@open-academy.org.uk

Please remember that for absences more than three days, we require medical evidence which could be in the form of a doctor's note, appointment slip, copy of a prescription or photocopy of label for medication bought over the counter from a chemist.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

13. Chaplain's Easter Reflection

When life gets overwhelming, we tend to forget about the blessings and the good things in our life. With all that life throws at us, it can be difficult to not be incredibly stressed out. The last thing on our minds is feeling blessed or thankful when things don't go right.

However, when we let this stress rule over our lives we forget to appreciate the small things. Often, a little means a lot. We might forget to say thank you to someone who went above and beyond, or lose our sensitivity to others. Stress over time will cause us to lose the gratitude and appreciation we have for the blessings in our life. Don't let your gratefulness diminish any further, thankfulness is a stress buster as it causes us to focus on all that is good in our lives.

In closing, a Bible verse comes to mind and it says this:

"Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious - the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse and the God of peace will be with you".

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

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain