

Open Academy Update 17 September 2021
For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child.

Dear Parents/Carers

We have a full newsletter for you this week with a special feature on homework, why we do it, what we are now expecting and how you can support your child to achieve.

Our Academy Council – Open Voice last year asked that we take steps to make the academy even safer and friendlier to students who identify as LGBT+ and at the same time we were asked to look at further challenging racism in our community. To this end, I am delighted to say that we have secured external support for both of these elements of our diversity and equality agenda, so we will be setting up a Global Majority working group of students to look at issues of race and identity in the academy everyday life and curriculum.

They will be working with a consultant from BAMEed East who will be connecting our students to a group of students who have tackled issues of identity in their school in New York. This should be a very exciting project alongside the project to recognise and support students who are LGBT+, who will be working with the Norfolk LGBT+ project consultants to ensure that we are here for all our students no matter how they identify or their sexuality. Knowing that we are already strong on supporting all students irrespective of any characteristics is great, but taking these steps should ensure that we continue to improve support for all.

This term in our skills for life program, which includes PHSE, the assembly program and tutor time, we will be exploring the essential area of sexual harassment and sexual harm. This is in response to the wide national campaigns around this agenda and we will be doing all we can to ensure students know we have zero tolerance of harassing behaviour on any grounds. Students should know that they can talk to their form tutors, assistant heads of year, or Mrs Reed if they have any worries, concerns or if anything happens.

We have now added an email address to make things easy for those who would rather communicate in this way at tellus@open-academy.org.uk. The 'tell us' email will be monitored daily and a designated safeguarding lead will respond within a day if students use this method of communication. Please do ask your child about the program over the coming weeks.

There are all sorts of things on the horizon – it looks as though we will be asked to vaccinate our children via schools shortly. As we have had no official guidance on this yet, I will say nothing further except that I will share any and all key information with you when we get it, and we will try to answer any questions once we know what is being requested. It might be, however, a good time to start discussing it with your child and family in anticipation.

Please keep doing all you are to keep Covid at bay, so far so good. I know you are taking extra precautions around illness which is great to see – if in doubt stay home and test, and it is great to see how many people are regularly testing and recording – 3 further cases did not enter the academy last week thanks to parent diligence – so please do keep doing what you are doing.

We will be doing all we can as we plan key events to make them as safe as possible – including the Year 7 parents evening next week on Tuesday, 21 September, the Open evening on the Wednesday, 29 September and 6th Form Open evening on the Thursday, 7 October. Remember when you visit you may well be asked to use a face covering, sanitise your hands and follow extra safety precautions.

Finally this week, I wanted to raise a new process in the academy. To challenge lateness to lessons, students will now be expected to 'pay-back' any time lost through lateness on a Friday break, lunch or after school. We believe teaching students to be on time is a crucial life skill and frankly since the pandemic, some have lost all sense of time.

I hope you will support us in this challenge, as my first headteacher said to me when I was at school, "It's no use saying but I was only a minute late to the rail staff as you watch the train that you just missed disappear off the end of the platform!"

Have a wonderful week and I hope you enjoy the rest of the newsletter

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Parent Guide for Homework

Welcome to the new school year. I would like to hopefully answer the key questions and queries for parents and carers concerning a variety of aspects regarding homework.

At Open Academy homework is published for students and parents via Microsoft Teams.

Homework is a key part of our curriculum and focuses on consolidating and applying learning from lessons, as well as preparing students for future learning.

There is a link between homework and academic achievement. The time you spend on doing homework will develop more than academic skills alone. Homework sessions encourage your child to use their time wisely, work independently and engage better with the subject matter. It has been proven to improve students' memory and critical thinking.

Five main reasons to do homework:

1. Doing homework will help children develop essential learning skills that will serve them well throughout their life.
2. Working independently will teach children to apply skills to new situations and extend their learning ability.
3. Homework will teach children to find and employ resources such as libraries, internet and other learning materials. Actively searching for source materials to find information will help develop important study skills.
4. The evidence shows that the impact of homework, on average, is five months' additional progress. Benefits are likely to be more modest, up to two to three months' progress on average if homework is more routinely set. Ref: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>
5. Doing homework will aid Children now and at exam time, as it offers increased discipline for revision.

I have summarised any potential questions below in what we hope will be a helpful guide and enable you to further support your son/daughter.

1. 'What is my role in homework?'

Encouragement is a major role. Ensure that your child manages and copes with the workload. Sit with them. Talk to them about the tasks. If youngsters verbalise their learning, they are more likely to retain the knowledge.

2. 'I'm busy and don't have time to help. What can I do?'

It's not essential that you sit with them and work alongside them, but showing an interest is imperative. Ask them what tasks they're undertaking tonight and sound enthusiastic!

3. 'I can't help because education has changed since I was at school. I don't know what my child is taught'

You can support by appearing interested in school, reading the school newsletter, attending parents' evenings. Generally, show an interest in school. Check the school website.

4. 'I don't know enough about a specific topic to help my child. How can I help?'

Youngsters thrive on rewards and encouragement. Maybe look at some information together. Help collect information. Supporting is an excellent way of helping.

5. 'It's noisy and there's no space at home'

The school has several homework Hubs which run until 4.00pm. There are also opportunities at lunchtimes and break to complete homework. These homework Hubs are fully supervised and supported by our head of years who can offer additional advice and support if required.

6. 'How much homework should my child be doing?'

The following has been provided for time and frequency that homework is set but it is important to remember that it is the quality of the work completed rather than the quantity. The times provided below are a weekly average and the amount set may vary from week to week.

AUTUMN TERM 2021-2022			
When:	KS3	KS4	KS5
W/B: 13 September A	English, Maths, Science Food	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 20 September B	Geography, History, MFL, Art, Drama	Option subjects	All subjects
W/B: 27 September A	English, Maths Science, Computing	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 4 October B	MFL, D&T, Music, PE, RS	Option subjects	All subjects
W/B: 11 October A	English, Maths, Science	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 18 October B	Geography, History	Option subjects	All subjects
October Half term			
W/B: 1 November A	English, Maths, Science	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 8 November B	Geography, History, MFL, Art	Option subjects	All subjects
W/B: 15 November A	English, Maths Science, Computing	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 22 November B	MFL, D&T, Food, Music	Option subjects	All subjects
W/B: 29 November A	Science, Drama, PE, RS	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects
W/B: 6 December B	Geography, History	Option subjects	All subjects
W/B: 13 December A	English, Maths	Core (English, Maths, Science)	All subjects

The homework set is proportionate to the number of timetabled lessons in each subject:

KS3

Subject	Core (English, Maths, Science)	Geography, History and MFL	Art, Computing, DT, Drama, Food, Music, PE and RS	Independent Reading and revision.
Time per half term (6 week period)	6 hrs in total	4 hrs	8hrs	6hrs

This equates to 4 hours of homework per week this includes the following breakdown.

- In English, Maths, Science: Students will receive 3 pieces of homework 40 minutes per half term.
- In Geography, History, MFL: Students will receive 2 pieces lasting 40 minutes of homework per half term.
- In Art, Computing, DT, Drama, Food, Music, PE and RS: Students will receive 1 piece lasting 1 hour of homework per half term.
- In addition to the work set in class all students in Key Stage 3/4/5 are expected to regularly revise and review their notes, seek enrichment opportunities and challenges. They are also expected to read for pleasure for at least 20 minutes a night. In addition to promoting reading for pleasure, students benefit from enhanced fluency and the wider general knowledge that arises from regular reading, thus supporting learning in all aspects of the curriculum. Literacy will continue to be promoted throughout the curriculum and reading for pleasure will be supported in all subjects' areas and through the DEAR approach (Drop Everything and Read).

At KS3 the National Average of Homework hours is 4 hours per week.

KS4

Subject	Core (English, Maths, Science)	Options	RS	Independent Reading and revision.
Time per half term (6 week period)	12 hrs in total	16 hrs in total	1 hr in total	6hrs

This equates to 6 hrs of homework per week.

- In core (English, Maths and Science): Students will receive up to 4 pieces of homework lasting 60 minutes per half term
- In option subjects: Students will receive 3 pieces of homework lasting 60 minutes per half term
- In RS: Students will receive 1 piece of homework lasting 60 minutes per half term
- No homework set for core PE

The national average of homework for KS4 is 6 hours per week.

KS5

Students to receive homework every week lasting 120 minutes from each of their subject teachers

7. 'My child doesn't tell me about homework. What can I do?'

You can log into Microsoft Teams to track and monitor the homework and for notices from class teachers. Ask your son/daughter's form tutor if any issues. Ask your child open questions about today's learning at school.

Also, on our school website we have links to our "how to videos" on You Tube.

8. 'All my child seems to do is finish off work done in classes'

It is important from time to time to finish off classwork. However, homework should take many forms. If you aren't sure – ask or send in a query.

9. 'My child spends more time than is necessary on their homework'

Students work at different speeds. However, if they are spending inordinate amounts of time on tasks make a note and send an email to the subject teacher.

10. 'My child finds the homework too easy and/or finishes it too quickly.'

As previously stated, students work at different speeds, however, should your child be finding the work too easy or completing quickly, they can always do the extension activities that are suggested. It is also worthwhile checking the quality of the work that is completed as well. Should the work remain unchallenging please inform the class teacher in the first instance.

Finally, homework is used to support classwork. It is an attempt to help youngsters become independent learners and more importantly form a base of good practice which can be built on in future years. Open Academy regards homework as an integral part of the learning process. We hope you've found this guide useful. If you would like to make any suggestions for improvement, please contact me.

Mr Fisher
Assistant Principal

2. Lateral Flow Tests

Thank you for continuing the lateral flow testing at home, you should now be receiving the reminder notifications again which you can also use for logging test results. Please continue to record the results so we can see that students are keeping up to date with testing.

If a student has tested positive recently then they will not need to resume testing until 90 days after their positive test result. If this is the case and you would like us to stop sending test kits home then please let us know.

Mrs Appleby
Business Manager

3. Year 7 News

We are very pleased with the continued effort from our Year 7 students. The exams officer was extremely complimentary regarding their conduct in the CAT assessments.

An email has been sent out, and letters sent home, regarding the Year 7 parents meeting on Tuesday, 21 September. This is an opportunity for you, as parents, to meet your child's tutor and to discuss how they have settled in and address any concerns that you have.

Please make the appointment online but the meeting is face to face.

If you are unable to attend but have any concerns about your child, please contact their tutor at school.

Please remind your child that if they are cycling into school, that they must be wearing a helmet, ensure that their bike is locked and not to cycle in the school grounds. We have had couple of near misses with bike verses pedestrian this week. Students must walk with their bike in the school grounds.

Students who have gained the most achievement points this week:

Isla Armes	24
Tiffany Scott	21
Nyomi Harris	21
Kieran Sinclair	15
Mason Fuller	15
Juhasz Jason	15

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 7

Mrs Middleton – Assistant Head of Year 7

4. Year 8 News

Wow! What an amazing start to Year 8. It has been great to see students complete their first full week of year 8 with such positive attitudes and demonstrating some outstanding LEARNNT behaviour. Now is the time where the year team are starting to look at the Student Leadership Team and Ambassadors for the year group and we would like to remind students that every student has the opportunity to apply if they wish. It is a privilege and students must demonstrate they can behave responsibly and act as good role models to other students in the academy. If successful students will have the opportunity to attend Student Council and Student Voice meetings, as well as supporting the academy with other events such as parents' evenings and open evenings.

We would just like to take this opportunity to remind students that shirts must be tucked in correctly and phones must only be used during social time, if sat down at a table. Please also be aware that if your child has a Hub session on their timetable, they are expected to attend. This is a supportive session to help them with any homework that has been set this academic year and your support in ensuring they attend is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about Hub sessions then please do let us know.

There has been an amazing 2290 achievement points issued since we have been back in school. Well done to D8 Mr Walters form who have received 425 achievement points so far this week. Top individual achievers so far:

Liam Kerr
Keeley Youngs
Mohammed Ali Areen
Lily- Anna Nash
Roman Taylor
Oskar Coleman
Tyler Hanwell
Tyler Paul
Ty Cook
Laurence Hawkins
Layla Moody

Well done Year 8! Keep up the hard work!

Ms Whitwood and Mr Crawford - Heads of Year 8

Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

Students have now been back for a full week at Open Academy and some fantastic learning has been taking place. The vast majority of students have received over 25 achievement points so far this term with some higher than 50.

Uniform is still a big focus with students being reminded to keep their shirts tucked in at all times and their blazers on while in the building. There have only been a couple of students not having their blazers this week, which is a great start. Please can you also remember that there should not be any students wearing leggings, short skirts, tight trousers or facial piercings. Please see the school uniform policy for further clarification.

Hubs began again this week and will continue to do so with an aim for students to catch up on missed homework. This will continue to develop during the school year.

So, all in all, a great positive start to the academic year for Year 9 with just one or two tweaks to be made in the future.

Mr Pickup – Head of Year 9

Mrs Smith – Assistant Head of Year 9

6. Year 10 News

We've had an amazing 1,387 achievement points awarded in the past week to Year 10. It has been an encouraging start to the academic year with students working hard in their lessons. Well done to each and every one of our students. The following students achieved the most achievement points this week: Lauren Aldous, Joshua Carter-Strike, Erin O'Neill, William Orr, Owen Middleton, Dalia Rosca, Gerrard Sandell, Rose Wheatley, James Hoyer and Mille Walker.

Good luck to our Duke of Edinburgh students going on their first trip today and camping overnight. We look forward to the photos and hope the weather stays fine.

A reminder that the school photographer is in school on Monday.

Football club training starts Monday after school for all Year 10 students. The club will finish at 4.00pm.

We have had a few applications for Head Boy and Head Girl. Student Voice nominees are coming through for each tutor group. If anyone is interested please encourage them to apply.

Hannah Jordan, Dalia Rosca and Lola Pauling have bravely entered the muddy 5k Race for Life on 17 October 2021. Please find a sponsorship link if you would like to sponsor them.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/unknown-nerds>

Homework Hubs are running after school. If your child has a hub session on their timetable it is important that they attend. Please let us know if your child has any issues completing homework on Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams video guides are available through the school website by going to Student > Learning Area.

Library clubs are starting up next week and Manga & Comics club is taking place on Monday after school. Books and Biscuits Club will be taking place during Thursday lunchtime. The library is also open after school Wednesday-Friday for students to use the library for homework etc. All clubs are open to all students. Please look at the library section of this newsletter.

The Open Ark is open to Year 10 and 11 on a Thursday lunchtime for social clubs, table tennis, table football and board games.

Mr Lambert – Head of Year 10
Mrs Roe – Assistant Head of Year 10

7. Year 11 News

After the strong start last week, it's wonderful to see that Year 11 are going from strength to strength! Overall their attitude is brilliant and if this continues they will do themselves very proud indeed. Thank you to all parents who are helping with ensuring the students arrive to school in correct uniform, and for the support with the new period 6. The students have been invited to the sessions that they need to attend and these will really benefit them.

Their collective achievement points this week are 1552, which is amazing. The top five students are:

Cayden Bobbin	32
Emily Perrett	31
Melissa Mills	31
Izzy Taylor	29
Ema Vaskyte	28

Keep up the great work!

The students should be used to their new homework routines now, so please remind them to do their homework in the week it is set. The homework timetable has been developed in such a way as to stop homework mounting up and students feeling overwhelmed, so they should be keeping to this schedule.

Details of a Next Steps Fair will be sent home on Monday, so look out for the letter in their bags.

Mrs Clayton – Head of Year 11
Mrs Roberts – Assistant Head of Year 11

8. Sixth Form News

Happy first full week of lessons Year 12 and 13 students!

We have had a great week this week and everyone has settled in really well. I am so pleased to see the majority of students utilising private study time, and that almost all students have handed all homework in by the deadline set. Please keep this up as it stands you in good stead for the upcoming year.

A few events below:

Personal Statement writing course:

We will be covering this for Y13 soon, but in case any of you wanted to get a head start:

HE Guidance: It's UCAS Personal Statement Week – Have You Started Yours?

Thursday 23 September

16.30-17.00

Info and booking: <https://www.channeltalent.co.uk/event/he-guidance-its-ucas-personal-statement-week-have-you-started-yours-with-hannah-wake-lydia-newton-higher-education-advisers-from-university-of-east-anglia/>

Free online event for parents and carers to explore the world of Higher Education:

Higher Education Information evening

When: Wednesday 29th September

Time: 18:30 – 19:15

Where: Zoom (link provided during registration)

Register here: [Take Your Place at the Parent & Carer Higher Education Information Evening Tickets, Wed 29 Sep 2021 at 18:30 | Eventbrite](#)

Mrs Molloy
Head of Sixth Form

9. Careers

The Greater Norwich Opportunities Fair is back this year as a 'real' event at The Top of the Terrace, Carrow Road on 6 October 12.00-7.00pm. This is an event aimed at Year 11 students and their families who are considering Post 16 choices and is a great chance to meet representatives from Sixth Forms, Colleges, Apprenticeship providers and Employers. The event is free to attend and the attached flyer gives details of how to register or alternatively students can collect a letter from the Year 11 Office which explains all!

Mrs Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

10. Drama

Open Drama Club will be starting on Wednesday, 22 of September after school 3.15-4.15 in the drama studio (F62). It is open to all KS3 students and is an opportunity to meet new people, practice drama skills and work towards performances.

Due to the damage done to the floor of the Drama Studio, I have had to make the decision that drama for students in Year 7 & 8 will be done in bare feet. This is because outdoor shoes leave marks on the floor and brings mud, grass etc into the practical space which students are then trying to work in. Just wearing socks causes a health and safety risk as students are more likely to fall when moving around the space. However, if your son/daughter has gravity style trampoliner socks with the grips underneath then this would be acceptable. I would also advise that students who choose to wear a skirt for drama bring shorts/plain black leggings to put on for practical sessions.

Mrs Ormosi
Teacher

11. PE

We are delighted to announce that we are now able to begin running our extra-curricular programme from next week. To begin with, some sessions will be put on for students at lunch times, prior to after-school activities beginning the week after.

Each year group will have the opportunity to play some badminton, basketball, or anything else in the sports hall during lunch. Students can simply bring trainers to take part or remain in their PE kit if they have PE before or after their lunch.

The following times are available.

Monday -	Year 11	1:30-2:00
Tuesday -	Year 9	1:00-1:30
Wednesday -	Year 7	12:30-1:00
Thursday -	Year 8	1:00-1:30
Friday -	Year 10	1:30-2:00

Students will then be given more information next week about the return of after-school clubs, where we are intending to run, football, netball, basketball, and remote-control model club (with Mr Pimlott).

Mr Richardson
Teacher

12. Library News

We are currently accepting applications for our student librarian programme. This is a fantastic opportunity for students who love books and the library to get more involved with school life. To apply, students should create a poster (by hand or using ICT) to showcase why they would make a good member of the team. Applications close on Thursday, 30 September. Students in Year 8 and above are able to apply and should see Miss Ling for more information.

We're also very excited for our library clubs to restart next week. Students do not need to sign up in advance, but can simply turn up to take part. The following clubs are running this term:

Books & Biscuits



What is it? Our lunchtime reading club is a chance for students to share what they've been reading and get new reading recommendations while enjoying some snacks.

When: Thursday lunchtimes. *Students may have their lunch in the library during this club (a packed lunch or dry food from the canteen only. No hot meals.)

Miss Ling
Librarian

13. Attendance

For week 7.9.2021 to 11.9.2021, we had an amazing 461 students who achieved 100% attendance from Year 7 to 11. We also had 48 students in our 6th Form who also achieved 100% attendance. Well done to all those students!

Our attendance for 7.9.2021 to 11.9.2021 was 95.79 % for Years 7-11 and for the 6th Form, it was 98.76%. Well done!

Last week, an attendance at school and legal intervention letter was sent to all parent/carers in Year 7-11 via email. In case you did not receive this, please find this letter, as attached.

Just a reminder that If your child is absent due to illness, medical appointment etc, please contact reception or email student.absence@open-academy.org.uk to inform us of the reason for their absence before 8.30am, if possible.

For any absence in term time i.e. holidays, please could you kindly complete and return a form prior to the absence. These forms are available from reception.

We are currently monitoring punctuality of students to school and also to lessons. Please could you reiterate the importance of punctuality to your son/daughter.



Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

14. Chaplain's Reflection

In this life, through the good times and the bad, we can all lead in something to make a difference. An example of this is found in a poem by Christian Larson and its very inspirational:

***To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.
Promise yourself these things.***

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain

GREATER NORWICH OPPORTUNITIES FAIR

OCT
6
2021

12 pm - 7 pm

Post-16 event for Year 11
students and their families

Learn about the education and
employment opportunities
available after GCSEs, and meet
representatives from:

- Sixth-forms
- Further education
- Employers
- Apprenticeship providers



Top of the Terrace, Norwich City Football Club
Register at: bit.ly/GNOFStudents2021
Free attendance for students and their families

