

Open Academy Update 3 December 2021

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

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome to this week's newsletter and this week I would like to start as I often do, with a thank you!

Your amazing generosity has meant that last week we raised £333.50 for Children in Need. Despite the backdrop of such economic challenges being faced in our community, that is an excellent result. Mr Ward and I grew moustaches for the 'Movember' men's health campaign and thanks to the generosity of our colleagues and friends, have raised £240 for the charity which works to raise the profile of Men's Cancers and Men's Mental health. I am also delighted to see lots of Christmas hampers coming together in various form areas and staff rooms. Having been the recipient of Christmas charity when I was younger, and knowing what a difference it made for us, I can only say thank you on behalf of those in need. Whatever you can give is appreciated.

Still on the subject of charity, this year, our Academy Student Council – Open Voice – have brought together the views of the Year Councils and, in a busy council meeting this week, agreed that this year, the charities to be supported by the Academy would be, Cancer Research, WaterAid, and a homegrown charitable cause – the Year 11 prom. So most of our charitable activities will be split between those three causes until next academic year.

The Academy Council were delighted to welcome Callum Perry, our latest governor recruit, who attended the meeting as an observer. As his focus is student voice, this was a good introduction for him to see the students in action, and he left commenting on how well the students discussed, debated and built on each other's ideas and suggestions.

Topics discussed included feedback from a recent anti-bullying conference many had attended, with some more ideas and actions for the Academy to put in place. The students appreciated the new LGBTQ+ Rainbow and the Black Lives Matter Banners now proudly hanging from the atrium ceiling, both symbolising our commitment to equality which the Student Council had requested to sit alongside our values. (I did not share the rigmarole of my Monday evening after the Academy closed trying to put the banners up using my fishing rod! Mr Wilkinson, Miss Wenlock and I got there eventually but I have 4 more banners to go to put up the rest of our values, and I'm not looking forward to another session. Casting line is easy when I'm pointing at the sea but much trickier when there are internal windows I could break! Never mind, the first two new banners are up and the students were very pleased.

Finally, on the charity thoughts, as is becoming the tradition, alongside the Christmas Hampers appeal, we also support Christmas Jumper day. This year, Christmas Jumper Day, in aid of Save the Children, will be on 10 December 2021. Students can choose to wear their Christmas jumper along with their normal uniform for a suggested donation of £1. This should not, however, mean rushing out and buying a jumper. Invariably, the most popular jumpers are the ones that people have homemade with old Christmas decorations, just as long as there are no glass baubles or anything requiring mains electricity. I hope to see some creative efforts again this year.

I will close with a COVID update. We have seen a sharp uptick in cases again this week, over 20, which means it is definitely still about in our community. We have taken a range of steps as per guidance from the government to limit the spread so we are no longer doing face-to-face assemblies, the Year 7 disco and end of term church service have all had to be cancelled and we are not even meeting in person as a staff team from last Tuesday. I am still hopeful that our Carol Concert can go ahead albeit with reduced numbers, however, I will do a final risk assessment and consult with the Trust on Monday. There may well then be further safety instructions assuming we go ahead, however we will see what the weekend brings. So, please keep twice-weekly testing and, please enjoy the rest of our newsletter.

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Seneca

Open Academy subscribes to a website called Seneca. It is a great site to help students learn key knowledge. You can see what your child has been doing and how well by following the instructions on this link. The school has paid for the full premium version so this is free for you to use:

<https://help.senecalearning.com/en/articles/3990859-how-to-connect-my-parent-account-to-my-child-s-account>

Year 11 and 13 have recently completed their PPE1 exams. The students have been receiving feedback this week and that will continue into next week. The behaviour of the students was perfect despite the disruption that they have faced over the past few years. Some students are worried that these may become their GCSEs and A-levels. Further details will be given when schools are informed (this is likely to be on 7 February 2022). Guidance to schools has been to give 3 opportunities to do exam papers in the academic year. We will be completing PPE2 as planned next half term. That will give us plenty of opportunity to gather evidence for grades should that be necessary.

Mr Ward
Vice Principal

2. Autumn Reports

Year 9 and Year 12 Autumn Reports are now available via the SIMs Parent App.

The academy uses SIMS Parent App to provide parents with reports at key points across the year, student attendance details, daily achievement and behaviour events and timetable information. Parents can also use the data collection facility to inform the academy of any changes in parental or student personal information.

For more information, please visit our webpage [SIMS Parent App - Open Academy \(open-academy.org.uk\)](https://www.open-academy.org.uk/sims-parent-app). Alternatively, please email the school if you require any help with SIMs Parent: simsparent@open-academy.org.uk

Rachel Wilkinson

3 Year 7 News

It has been significantly colder this week and not only have we felt this in the school building but also in PE. Please ensure that your child has suitable clothes for PE outdoors. Unless the weather makes PE unsafe, we will take lessons outside throughout the year. Students are permitted to wear a black or navy sweatshirt or fleece and jogging bottoms. No other colours are permitted and if students wish to wear leggings, they must be sports leggings to ensure that they are not see through and suitable for sports activities.

Thank you for your generosity in donating items for the Christmas hampers. If you have not yet donated, there is still time.

Last year, we noticed a rise in Covid infections as we approached Christmas, possibly related to the weather being colder and us spending more time inside. We have a number of measures in place to reduce the risks to students and therefore our families. We have a one-way system in place and ask students to be in specific places, such as the Atrium, at break and lunch. We cannot have students just wandering around as this increases the risks. We have also asked students to wear masks when they can. I am pleased to say that Year 7 have been very respectful in complying with this. We have had to remind them to wear them or put them over the mouth and nose, but this has to be expected as we get back into the habit of wearing them again. Some students in the Academy have very vulnerable family members at home and so we greatly appreciate the support of all students in reducing the risk of spreading Covid where we can. Please keep testing regularly. Many of our cases are being identified through the LFT when there are no symptoms.

If a student runs out of money on their dinner money account, we do permit a small overdraft. Please can you check with your child and ask them to let you know if their account needs topped up to avoid this happening. If there are any problems, please call and let us know and we will do our best to help. As of January 2022, we will be a cashless school and all items will have to be paid for online. This includes trips and visits, as well as lunch money. Please check that your account is set up to avoid any inconvenience.

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 7

Mrs Middleton – Assistant Head of Year 7

4. Year 8 News

With only two weeks to go, the proper countdown to Christmas has begun, and the Christmas tree in the atrium is a beautiful sight! The Year office also has some added sparkle.

On the other hand, it has been a grim week for the weather: cold, dark, windy, rainy, and even a spot of snow! So, it has been brilliant to see that the overwhelming majority of Year 8 students have maintained their outstanding levels of effort and behaviour. We have two weeks of learning left, and while we are all looking forward to the holidays after a long first term back, it is important that we use these last two weeks effectively and productively to ensure maximum learning and progress. The Christmas holidays will give you plenty of time to rest and recharge, so keep up the excellent work until then!

The most significant news this week for schools has been the new government guidelines based around coronavirus. As a result, it is important to remember to wear masks in communal areas, and please can we ask that students remember to bring masks with them to school so that we can protect our community. We do not have an unlimited stock of spare masks!

As a year group, we continue to lead the way in terms of achievement points, and the amount of high-quality homework being submitted. It is especially good to see that Year 8 are still putting in such a great effort when we know that everyone is feeling a bit tired. Resilience and self-motivation are extremely important life skills, so it is fantastic to see so many of our young people building them up effectively.

Shouts of this week:

- Mrs Marsham Maths – Caleb Pye and Lilly-Marie Patey – great effort in lesson
- Mrs Lamb – Layla Moody - excellent work in Hub
- Miss Whitwood – all Open Voice representatives – fantastic meeting this week with lots of participation and teamwork

Well done to Mr Bradshaw's C8 Tutor Group, you have the most achievement points this week at 387. Mr Munday's form I8 are the current leaders of the term with 4387. It's close at the top. We are excited to see who will be the top Tutor Group for the term. This will be announced next week, and there will be a prize for the winning tutor.

Top five achievers so far this term:

- Isioma Onuchukwu 265
- Tyler Paul 246
- Madison Gray 243
- Lucy-Rose Brown 242
- Areen Mohammed Ali 242

It's very close at the top and changes week by week. Keep up the good work! Again, the top achiever for the term will be announced next week and a little prize will be awarded to the top 3.

In terms of uniform, we are typically getting things right. However, we do need to remind a few students of our expectations – school jumpers and coats may be worn around the school, hoodies should not. If coats are worn, hoods should not be up – there is no need for this inside the school building. Finally, we ask that students do not wear leggings. These expectations are all included in the School Uniform Policy.

We are all proud to be linked to this Year Group, and are really looking forward to a strong finish to the term. Keep your standards high, and maintain your efforts – they are very much appreciated by the Year Team, your teachers, and the rest of the staff.

Ms Whitwood and Mr Crawford - Heads of Year 8

Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

With only 2 weeks to go and the weather turning wintry with some small showers of snow, I feel I can finally say "it's beginning to look a lot like...". With all the extra challenges of the rising rate of Covid, once again, students are performing and behaving with extra resilience.

Achievement points still pour in for Y9 which is great to see. This is testimony to the dedication, hard work and wonderful ability of our Year Group.

The current tally for this week is:

AED – 69

LGA – 120

RPH – 52

NST – 107

For the third week in a row, weekly late detentions are reducing. Thank you for having supportive conversations at home, they definitely make a difference to our learners. This week, there has been a reduction of 139 minutes across the Year Group. We will now be informing parents/carers if their child is staying for an after-school detention on Friday, hopefully this improved communication will see further reductions in lost learning next week.

It is starting to feel cold in the Academy due to the necessity to ventilate classrooms. We want to concentrate on students learning and enjoying school and do not want to remind them to wear the correct uniform. Please encourage students to wear an extra layer under their school shirts. Hoodies are not allowed in school. Please wear a school jumper and a coat. You can purchase school jumpers from school from Mrs Rose in the school office at a cost of £14 and £17 each (sleeveless are £11 and £13), which they can wear throughout the day – Please contact us if there are any problems with this.

The improvement in students' appearances/uniform in this last week has been noticed and is a great improvement since the start of this half term. Again, thank you for your support in this and it is obviously working.

Thank you for your support at home and I hope we can continue to make progress as a Year Group as we head towards the winter break.

Mr Pickup – Head of Year 9
Mrs Smith – Assistant Head of Year 9

6. Year 10 News

Year 10 have achieved 1,302 achievement points this week. Well done to everyone for their individual hard work and efforts to achieve. Classroom assessments have been taking place this week and next week and this can sometimes unsettle the students but despite this they are still smiling and achieving. They should be proud of themselves for showing such amazing resilience with everything that is going on in the world.

Our top achieving students this week are: Jamil Ali, Jude Abramson, Scarlett Butler, Gera Dergacovs, Isla Gardner, Nathan Freeman, Hannah Jordan, Bryn Norris, Dalia Rosca, Ahmed Tsinev, Gerrard Sandell and Owen Middleton.



We are starting our annual 'decorate your tutor room' for Christmas challenge. Mr Thurston's tutor group have made a start. They have raised the bar but the challenge is on!

It is Christmas jumper day on Friday 10 December if students would like to wear a festive jumper with a contribution to charity.

Can we encourage students to bring their own masks and a spare into school, please. If you have any questions about anything, please give us a call.

Have a lovely weekend.

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

7. Year 11 News

I'd like to start by thanking parents for your support over students not wearing hoodies to school. If your child is feeling the cold at the moment, we do have school jumpers available to buy – please speak to either myself or Mrs Roberts. Up to date grades should be with you soon, we know that students are very anxious to get hold of these for sixth form/college applications and all the teaching staff have worked hard to get these marked as soon as they possibly could.

We have had lots of achievement points given this week with a total of 124. I'd like to congratulate our top 5 students this week – keep up the good work!

Emma Tyrrell 34
Tom Walker 34
Chloe Smith 32
Melissa Mills 32
Ethan Lowe 30

Period 6 revision lessons are up and running again after the break during assessments. Please ensure your child is attending these sessions when they are on, as they are a valuable opportunity to revise difficult topics and gain assistance and advice from teachers.

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

8. 6th Form News

UCAS Deadline

The UCAS deadline for completing the application was FRIDAY, 3 DECEMBER. If students do not think they will be able to submit the application by this date, they must speak to myself or Ms Davies as soon as possible.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) – Year 12

It is also worth students looking at the following FREE online courses managed and made by top universities. They relate to every A Level subject and many are also vocational, preparing students for the working world via an online platform. They really are excellent and can be done over a period of weeks with an allocated number of hours per week – recognised by UCAS and employers. They offer flexibility alongside A Level study and allow students to build valuable skills, no matter what their post-18 pathways are:

Future Learn Free Online Courses, set by top universities: <https://www.futurelearn.com/>

MOOC.org: <https://www.mooc.org/>

Ivy League Free Online Courses: <https://www.classcentral.com/collection/ivy-league-moocs>

Free academic and subject-specific TED talks: <https://www.ted.com/talks>

Free academic and subject-specific Gresham College lectures: <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures>

6th Form Area

Unfortunately, the 6th form area is starting to look a little messy. Please can I ask that all students look after the area; tuck chairs in, throw rubbish away, take books and papers away with them, put games away neatly. Please also do not move the chairs from one area to another.

GCSE Revision guides

If students have any revision guides from their GCSE years that are no longer need, please could I ask for them to be returned to me so that we could use them for our current Year 11s. Thank you!

Covid

Please can I ask that all students continue to test using lateral flows twice a week. As they are probably aware, our numbers of positive cases have risen slightly, so we all need to be extra vigilant. Students should also continue to wear masks in communal areas. Students can pick up more test kits from GO5.

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

9. Careers

- All Year 10 students should now have received their 'Self placement' form for summer work experience. The relevant sections must be completed by the student, parent and most importantly the employer where the work experience has been arranged. Completed forms should be returned to Careers Facilitator Caroline Davies who will work with the Year 10 team to coordinate all administration and arrange all Health and Safety checks with Norfolk County Council. Students who are unsure can speak to their PHSE teachers or Ms Davies in S12. If you have any questions, please contact caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk
- Our Sector of the Month for December and the festive season is Hospitality. The sector covers hotels, bars, restaurants, nightclubs and conference centres to name but a few of the locations where careers can be found. More information about all the different kinds of roles can be found

at <https://www.icanbea.org.uk/app/explore/industries/hospitality-103/> and may particularly interest students who enjoy Food Technology or Business Studies. Many of our Sixth Form students have part time jobs in the sector and this is great practice to improve 'soft skills' which are vital in many other employment sectors – time management, organisation skills, personal presentation, communication skills, the ability to stay calm and attention to detail.

- UCAS have released a new Careers Quiz to help young people what careers might best suit their interests and abilities. Once matched, students can explore job descriptions, courses that will help them on their journey and lots more. See it in action at www.ucas.com/careers-quiz

Mrs Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

10. Library News

Accelerated Reader December Raffle

We are running an Accelerated Reader Raffle in December. All students who get 100% on an AR quiz will be entered into a prize draw to win a selection pack. Winners will be drawn on the last day of term. Anyone can win as long as they keep reading, but you have to get a good score to make the quiz count!



December Reading Raffle



Every time you get 100% on an AR quiz in December (for a book in your ZPD) your name will be added to a raffle prize draw.

On the last day of term the names of 3 students will be pulled from the raffle to win a chocolate selection pack.

Remember, anyone can win as long as they get reading, but you have to have a good score to make the quiz count.

Twisted Tales Creative Writing Competition

We are currently accepting entries for the Young Writers Twisted Tales competition. The challenge: write a mini-saga (a 100-word story) from a villain's point of view. Students who are interested can find out more about the competition here: <https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions/KS3-4/twisted-tales?view=ind>

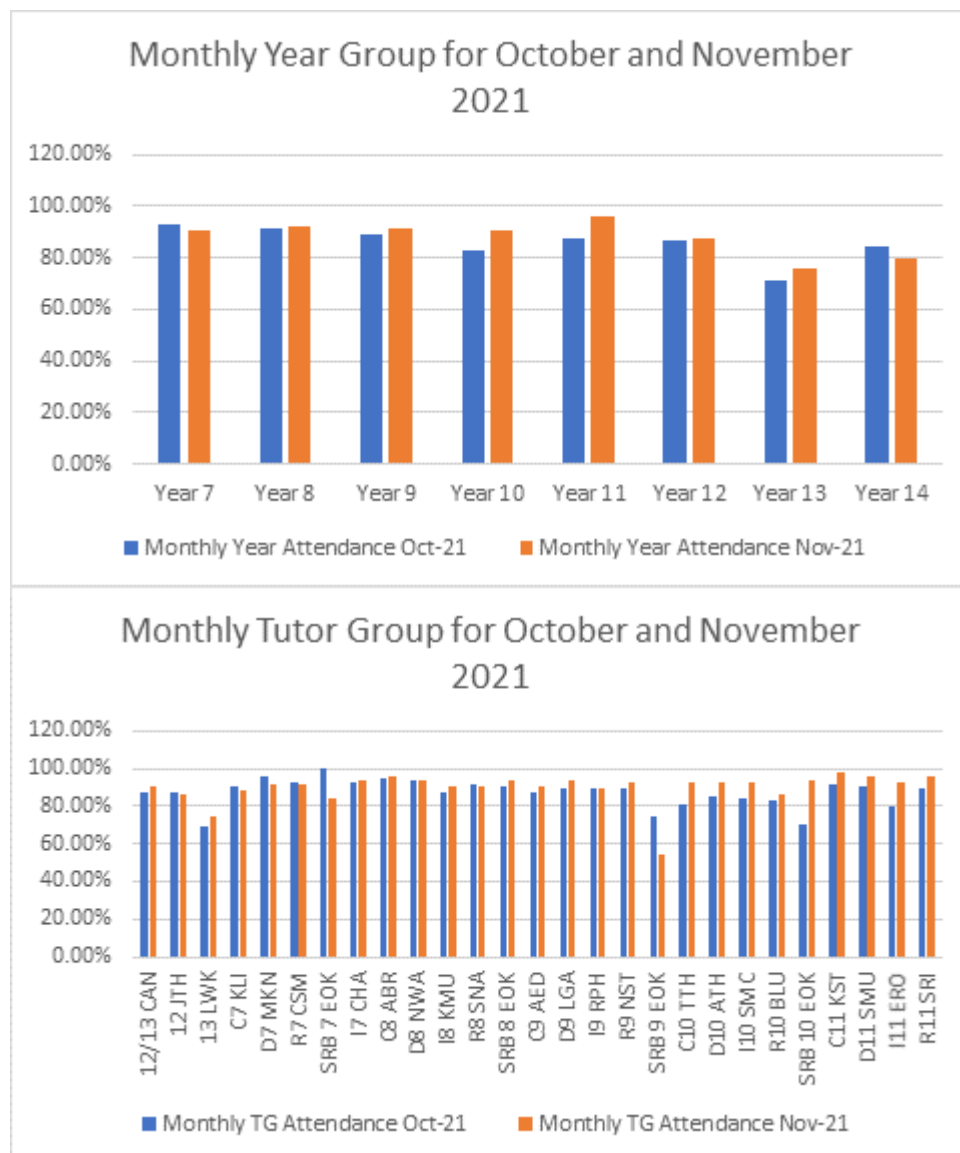
[Twisted Tales | Young Writers](https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions/KS3-4/twisted-tales?view=ind)

Rules. To make sure your entries are valid, please follow the rules listed below: Only one entry per person. Please include your child's name, age and full postal address on their entry.

www.youngwriters.co.uk

Entry forms are available from Ms Roberts (Head of English) or Miss Ling (Librarian). The deadline for entries is Friday 10 December 2021.

11. Attendance



Please see above comparison charts between the months of October and November 2021, for your information.

For student absences, we have a designated email address of student.absence@open-academy.org.uk Please could you use this when informing us of any absences, appointments etc. for your son/daughter.

Being in school on time is very important and students should be with their year group to then go into their tutor group for 8:40am. If students arrive after this time, they will need to sign in the late book in Reception. In addition, if they arrive after 9.05am, they will be coded with an unauthorised absence, which ultimately effects their attendance.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's News and Reflection

Our Open Academy Christmas carol concert will be taking place on Thursday, 9 December at 6.30pm so we would warmly invite you to come along for some seasonal cheer. It's going to be a great night of carols, performances and festive treats.

Please note that this is a pre-bookable event as we want to keep as COVID safe as possible. Please let me know by email mark.pimlott@open-academy.org.uk that you are coming, and a table will be reserved for you.



This year, we are giving out Christmas Hampers as random acts of kindness to our community again. Students are aware of this in school, but we would appreciate your support too. Below is an item list of goods that can be donated for the hampers, so please feel free to send items into the academy with your child.

Please note, it is very important that we stick to the hamper list. Perishable good vouchers can be given as well as donations. Thank you so much in advance for your generosity.

Christmas Hampers

List 2021

- Perishable Food Vouchers
- Stuffing
- Shloer/Red or White
- Custard
- Savoury Snacks
- Tin Of Chocolates
- Biscuit/Shortbread Tin/
Packets
- Christmas Crackers
- Christmas Cake
- Christmas Pudding
- Mince Pies
- Cranberry Sauce
- Gravy Granules
- Crisps
- Tinned fruit/Peas/Potatoes



Thought for the Week

This week at the beginning of advent I want to begin by telling some of the Christmas story. For the shepherds watching over their sheep, it started off as a quiet night. Then suddenly an angel was standing in front of them! Of course, they were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid". Then the angel announced that he was bringing good news that would give all the people great joy.

We all in our lives face things that seem terrifying and make us really fearful. We are perhaps feeling fearful at the moment of where this new variant of Covid is going and what the outcome will be. Fear can often leave us rooted to the spot. The people of that day felt the same way as they were being persecuted by Roman rule and were under a blanket of fear.

The good news about the baby Jesus being born was about to change all of that. Jesus was the messiah and He was the one to liberate them. I want to encourage you to reflect more on the Christmas story, perhaps more than you have ever done. The Christmas story speaks of a wonderful future, it speaks of fear being cast out and being replaced by hope. God speaks to us and tells us as the angel told the shepherds, do not be afraid. Let these words go over and over in our hearts and trust that good news and peace will soon be on its way.

In closing, with these thoughts in mind, be a source of good news to the people around you, they need to hear it. Good news provides so much hope and displaces fear.

You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless you.



Mark Pimlott
Chaplain

