

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

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome to our final newsletter of 2021

Merry Christmas!

What a year it has been. We began with the almost instant lockdown as the New Year began, we have gone through further lockdowns, in school distancing, testing, no masks, masks, most of these changes arriving with no notice from the government as the virus has stubbornly refused to come under control and yet...

Throughout we have carried on achieving huge amounts of catch up work completion this year, we have upped the homework, curated and improved knowledge organisers at key stage 3, been recognised for our online schooling by becoming one of only 50 schools nationally to be awarded the Microsoft Showcase School status (well done Mr Thompson!) and generally we have gone about the business of continuing to improve through and despite all of the things that have been thrown at us.

With our predictions looking strong for the results year ahead, the fact that we are well oversubscribed for students to join us in Year 7 and the huge effort we are putting in to ensure every child is supported to success in between, I can only thank my staff for their amazing efforts this year.

We are currently collecting parent voice via the Ofsted questionnaire questions, which I really encourage everyone to complete. We seem to have a few great supporters who write in and thank individuals and staff, which is most appreciated. We also have a few people whose students have an issue in school who will also put pen to paper – however the vast majority of you – who we hope are satisfied and happy with things, rarely complete the feedback, which means it is hard for us to gauge how we are doing in your eyes. I would therefore ask you, as a Christmas favour, to spend 2 or 3 minutes completing the questionnaire, which you can get to by clicking the link below:

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

I know these are terribly frustrating times, but the Open team work tirelessly to try to keep education going and try to make the academy an enjoyable place to be - it would be great to get some confirmation that you agree, or indeed to understand what more we could be doing if you don't.

I won't go on about our return testing process – I will just leave it that we have sent an email out yesterday with the details, if anything changes I will email directly as and when things happen.

Finally, this year then, I want to thank you for your amazing support with so many aspects of school life. Sending your children in looking smart in full uniform, supporting your children to attend Hubs, trips and activities and especially for your generosity supporting our various charities. I am delighted to report that this year, we have sent out 22 hampers to those who may benefit from some practical support this year. Although a little down numbers wise, again this year, 22 hampers with a value of over £50 of top quality Christmas fayre has been no mean feat, so for all your donations and especially for your hamper support - thank you!

Have a safe, wonderful Christmas, and a fantastic start to the New Year. With a nice long break, I look forward to seeing everyone back as per the letter yesterday (Y,10,11,12,13, on Wednesday, 5 January for a quick test then everyone back on Thursday, 6 January).

Have a lovely holiday

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Rewards

What an amazing end of the term, seeing so many students being rewarded for their achievements.

We have seen the top tutor group in each year be rewarded for having the highest attendance. I have to say I was a little surprised at how many students turned the marshmallows down on their hot chocolate!

We have seen 75 students across all five year groups be rewarded for their achievements, whether it was for the best rubrics score for completing their homework, the highest LEARNT achievement points or being nominated by their year team, we want to say a huge congratulations to all students involved.

We hope that these rewards can motivate other students to keep working hard as some of you were so close to making it this time with only a couple of points in it.

WELL DONE again to everyone!

Miss Whitwood
Head of Whole School Rewards

2. Year 7 News

No update.

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 7
Mr Hawkins – Cover Supervisor

3. Year 8 News

So here we are, on the final day of term! As a year team we are exceptionally proud of how well Year 8 have done as a group, and as a team, since the start of this academic year.

We are known throughout the school as a positive, motivated, polite, and hard-working year, and we aim to continue to build on our reputation next term. We have led the year group standing for achievement points throughout the year, and the vast majority of students have demonstrated consistently focused and effective behaviour for learning, and excellent progress.

As the longest term of the year, the autumn term can feel a bit gruelling – especially when the clocks change. As such, it has been wonderful to see the resilience and perseverance shown by Year 8 in making sure that they have maintained their standards and concentrated on putting their learning first. It has been a pleasure to teach (and learn from) inquisitive, perceptive, and imaginative students.

Our top achievers this term: Tyler Paul, Isioma Onuchukwu, Lilly-Anna Nash, Madison Gray, Areen Mohammed Ali and Kian Wright. Well done to you all for your hard work, commitment and enthusiasm. The top students have been changing all the time and it is still very close with only a few achievement points between them all. We are excited to see what happens next term.

We have enjoyed lunches, breakfasts and chocolates over the last few days celebrating the successes with some individuals in the year group. We hope they have enjoyed it as much as we have. There will be plenty more opportunities soon to celebrate successes.

It is important that students take the opportunity to rest and recharge over the holiday period. When we come back, we have a short half term, so it is vital that Year 8 come back ready to hit the ground running and maintain momentum with their learning. The half term will flash by, so we need to be focused from the very start.

We would ask parents and guardians to make sure that Year 8 are ready to come back with correct uniform as per the uniform policy, and fully equipped with pens, pencils, rulers, etc., so that they are ready to learn in each and every lesson.

We hope that you have a restful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year, and look forward to seeing our amazing young people in January.

Ms Whitwood and Mr Crawford - Heads of Year 8
Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 8

4. Year 9 News

The final day of the first term is upon us. It has been a long time since the start of this school year but Year 9 have excelled themselves with fantastic resilience, grit, determination and positivity. As I write it is just 8 days to go until the big 25th.

Achievement points still pour in for Y9 which is great to see, even in the final week. This is testimony to the dedication, hard work and wonderful ability of our year group. The current tally for this week is:

AED – 35
LGA – 39
RPH – 25
NST – 32

When students return in January please ensure that they are all in the correct uniform. This means skirts/trousers and not leggings. Also, can they have their blazers as these are part of the uniform code. Hoodies are not allowed but coats/jackets are if allowed by teachers in their ventilated classrooms.

Also, there has been a growing concern for equipment with more and more students asking for a pen in many of their lessons. Students are to come to school prepared for their learning, which includes the necessary equipment. Obviously, there is equipment which can be borrowed, but this should not be each lesson.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your continued support in these challenging times. The Covid pandemic has had a large impact on the learning of students all across the country and has affected everyone in different ways. It is only with your support that as a school we can continue to develop and grow as a safe place for students to come and learn.

I wish you all a fantastic, safe and healthy winter break and that students come back in January ready and raring to continue their learning journey at Open Academy.

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

5. Madrid Trip

Your son or daughter has been told by now if they have a place (or a reserve space) on the trip to Madrid. A confirmation letter is being sent home to those students with more details.

Thank you for your interest in this trip – it is great to be able to take the students away, and there will be more chances in the future.

Ms Stickland
Teacher – Head of Academic Faculty

6. Year 10 News

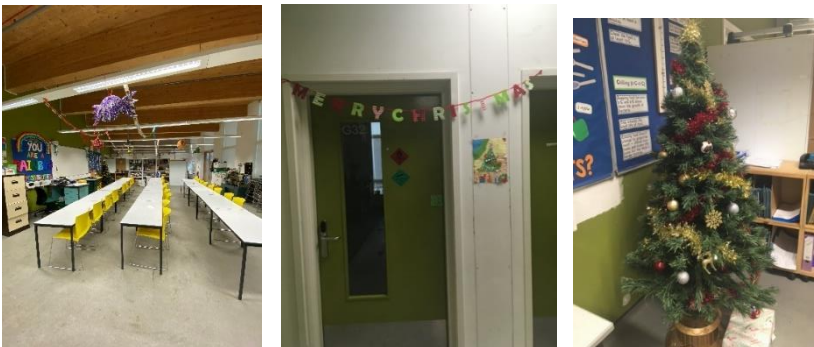
End of term! All students have worked hard this term and now deserve a well-earned Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Top achievers for week commencing 13 December are: Teyla Young, Ella Iftimie-Hau, Jamil Ali, Josh Tidd, Kimora Alexander, Kelsey Holman, Reema Alguarashi, Torri Ashton, Sade Woollard, Angelos Chatzopoulos, Jayden Muzembe, Gera Deracovs, James Hoye. Well done to you all.

Top achievers this half term are Gerrard Sandell, Isla Gardner, Jamil Ali, Lisa Kracewicz, James Hoye, Sade Woollard, Dalia Rosca, Summer Maccormack, Ahmed Tsinev and Rose Wheatley. Congratulations.

The tutor groups have made a real effort again this year with their decorating. It was so hard to choose a winner but the winner this year is Miss Luter's tutor group with Mr Thurston's tutor group coming a very close second.

We think that Miss Luter's tutor group thoroughly enjoyed making their recycled decorations!



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

7. Year 11 News

Merry Christmas! Autumn term is over and the first round of mock exams have been completed. The students have all worked so hard over the last term; I am so proud of the maturity they have shown in Year 11 so far and am looking forward to an amazing Spring term.

I know many of our Year 11 are spending lots of time revising at home, but I want to let them know to ensure they take the opportunity to switch off a bit over Christmas and forget about their studies for a little while, so they can come back to their busy Spring term fully rested and ready to go.

We had a celebration breakfast this morning at school where 15 Year 11 students were rewarded for their hard work this term. Well done to the following students:

Highest LEARNT Points – Chloe Warner, Emily Perritt, Ema Vaskyte, Sugar Chapman & Cintia Cardosa
Best Homework Marks – Tom Walker, Melissa Mills, Adrian Colcer, Izzy Taylor & Zak Pitts

Wild Cards (HOY/AHOY Choice) – Jess Wicks, Scarlett Taylor, Alfie Deadman, Connor Matthews & Harley Roxby

I'd like to thank all parents for their continued support; I hope you have a very merry Christmas.

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

8. 6th Form News

What a term. We made it hooray! It has been the longest of terms, with the freezing cold classrooms and the rising Covid numbers making most weeks seem even longer. However, in many ways this has been the BEST term I have experienced in 6th Form. Students never fail to impress me with their humour and dedication and hard work. It says a lot that I actually look forward to coming into work each day doesn't it. And a huge part of that is our amazing students.

Over the Xmas holidays

Please remember that I am only an email away. Students probably all know by now that I'm pretty swift on the email replies, so if at any point they need a chat, or are worried about anything at all, just get in touch with me.

UCAS

A humongous well done to those Year 13 students that have put in so much work to complete and send off their UCAS applications. We have already started seeing some offers coming in which is absolutely amazing! Keep checking your UCAS as more may flood in over the holidays.

NCS

The 6th Form area and the Football block have seen some changes. Huge thank you and well done to the Year 12s and the NCS staff for a really successful NCS programme. A date for your diaries – **Tuesday, 11 January 5:30pm – 7:30pm** – NCS will be holding a celebration evening at The Nest where all Year 12 are invited to attend and collect their certificates. Letters will be handed out on the first day back after Christmas. See below some pics from the programme:



All that is left for me to say is **Feliz Navidad**. Be safe. Be merry. And I'll see you in 2022.

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

9. Careers

There is still time for our Year 11 students to consider their Post-16 choices and help is available from our visiting Careers Adviser and from myself for those who are still unsure of their next steps. Applications for our own 6th Form remain open - simply go to the Open Academy website, 6th Form/Apply and the application form is there to fill in. Completed forms can be emailed to caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk. For students who are thinking of City College, the College has produced a helpful series of videos covering all the vocational courses they offer and which careers and job-roles the courses might lead to. The link is <https://www.ccn.ac.uk/info-events/>

Our Sector of the Month for December and the festive season is hospitality. This is an important sector which has been hit hard by the pandemic and covers hotels, bars, restaurants, nightclubs and conference centres. More information about all the different kinds of roles in the sector 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 6th 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.

A reminder that all Open Academy students have access to our careers information platform Unifrog. Whether you have a particular career or field in mind or just want to browse for general information or guidance, Unifrog is the perfect place to start. Students can log in using their Open Academy email address at www.unifrog.org

Dr Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

10. Library News

Reading Shout Outs!

This week we held a celebration in the library for our Accelerated Reader top 20. This rewards students who have taken and passed the most Accelerated Reader quizzes this term. We celebrated the students' success with hot chocolates, games and crafts. Well done to the following students who made it into the Top 20:

Rebecca Shapcott, Jayden Alden, Lena Warwrzyniak, Isla Armes, Amy Toms, Harley Ringer, Riley Brooks, Ada Anil, Layla Smith-Howell, Millie Hagger, Ria Wilsea, Samuel Hutt-Jeffery, Queenie-Rose Newrick, Leonard Read, Kayden Smith-Powell, Deacon Bobbin, Steven Ellis, Hannah Stagg, Kiera Boyd and Lucy-Rose Brown.

We would also like to congratulate the following students who won our December Reading Raffle for achieving 100% on an Accelerated Reader quiz in December: Riley Brooks, Harley Ringer and Amy Toms.

Holiday Book Access

A reminder that we have a school e-book platform that students are able to access over the holidays. With a library of over 3000 books, students have plenty to choose from including popular favourites and new releases. Students should go to <https://openacademy.eplatform.co/> and log in with their Microsoft email and password to borrow a book.

Wishing all our students a happy holiday. We look forward to seeing you again in the New Year!

Miss Ling
Librarian

11. Attendance

Don't forget to use our student absence email address to notify ourselves of your son/daughter's absence from the Open Academy or any appointments.

Many thanks for your support.

Leaver

Today, we say goodbye to Anastasija Brikule, Year 9, who is transferring to Sprowston Academy in January 2022. We wish her well for the future.

Admissions

In January 2022, we will welcome the following students who are transferring to Open Academy -

- Kelly Fable – Year 9
- Evie Goodby – Year 9
- Ariyan Mahin – Year 9
- Lacey Cook – Year 10

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's News and Reflection

Christmas Hampers

A big thank you to all that gave so generously to our Christmas Random Acts of Kindness hampers this year. And because of your kindness we made 22 hampers up to be given out to our community which is fantastic. God bless you all.

This Week's Reflection

In this week's reflection I would like to continue in the Christmas story. As I said last week, fear was an experience that everyone involved felt. Fear can paralyse and it stops progress. Fear can often cause us to stop hearing good news as well. When we get so wrapped up in the things in our lives that make us afraid, we often miss many other messages and opportunities.

Can you imagine this, If the shepherds had remained in their state of fear and terror, they wouldn't have heard the message about the birth of Jesus and the hope that He would bring. They wouldn't have known where to find Him, and they wouldn't have heard about the peace He would bring to this earth.

At this moment in time there might be fears in our lives that are dominating our thought patterns and actions. I just want to encourage you in repeating the phrase that is mentioned multiple times in the Christmas story "do not be afraid", seek out the good news that is around you, push away your fears and know that there is hope for the future.

In closing, call out and put a stop to those things that might be restricting you from hearing the good news today.

I pray for a wonderful Christmas for all of you, your families and friends. May you feel the love, peace and presence of Jesus in your homes now and into the new year.
God bless you all.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain