

Open Academy Update 11 March 2022

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

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome to the newsletter this week.

The first thing I want to say this week is thank you to all those who responded to the newsletter survey. Although only around 7% of our parent group, that was actually higher than responded to our annual survey last year. The feedback was really positive and helpful and I have shared some of your suggestions with the year teams to think about – especially where it addresses an update for all year groups every week which we have a few ideas of how to achieve for next term.

We have also decided to poll people about their experiences with the academy when they come in for events so, starting with the Year 11 transition event coming up on Tuesday, 22 March. Hopefully we will have some staff with iPads/laptops asking you a few quick questions about the event in particular and things in general.

Overall from the feedback we received, people scored us a solid 7.5 out of 10 for how good the newsletter meets their needs – and just a little higher at 7.9 out of 10 when asked how easy is it to engage with the academy generally. I am happy that this means that generally we are OK, but we could be doing more and that is what we will aim to do starting next week.

Moving on, whilst the world appears to have said goodbye to COVID, for us it very definitely has not gone away. This week has been incredibly challenging with over a dozen staff off every day – many linked to COVID, which has put an enormous strain on everyone here. If the situation gets worse, it is possible we will start having to consider more drastic action than we have taken so far, up to and including closing one or two year groups at a time – we are not quite there yet, but we are not far off. Please keep an eye on our website and on your phones as any official texts we send out will always be accompanied by a note on the website.

Year 10 had a fantastic time out at the careers fair at the showground this week and loved the fact they were out on a trip which is fantastic for them. However, balancing the COVID risk it is starting to become tricky again so we are hoping other planned events and trips will go ahead, but I am keeping everything under review right now.

Please bear with us as we struggle with so much absence, we have been particularly hard hit in our fantastic pastoral team, so please do bear with us if our communications don't reach their usual standards.

Fingers crossed this is one final blast of the COVID times and by Easter all will be well. All I can do is keep you updated with the situation as we see it and try to ensure we keep everyone as safe as we can.

But enough of all that – on to the good news....

Jon Ford
Principal

Contents:

1. **Year 10 News**
2. **Year 11 News**
3. **6th Form News**
4. **Library**
5. **Cleaner Vacancy**
6. **Careers**
7. **Chaplain's Reflection**

1. Year 10 News

We are already now half way through this half term, can't believe Easter holiday is only 3 weeks away. Hope we are all starting to stock up on Easter eggs with Year 10 students not forgetting their favourite/only HOY and AHOY ☺

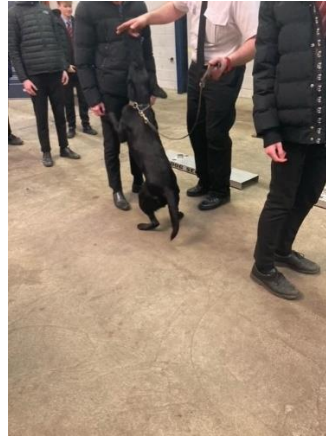
We had a very successful trip on Wednesday morning to the Norfolk Skills and Careers Festival at the Norfolk showground. It seemed all students enjoyed the event and took something from it. We hope it has given them more insight into what they want to do in their futures as young adults. There are some pictures below of the event and I would like to say a big thank you to Dr Davies for organising it all.

Could you please be having conversations at home about work experience week in July. Students have been given the forms and the deadline for completing and returning these to school is Friday, 29 April. It is vitally important that you get your form completed as soon as possible or the placements will not be allowed to happen. Dr Davies will be visiting tutor groups next week to answer any questions, pick up forms and provide replacement forms if needed.

Remember that all students must attend Hub and that the school uniform policy is followed, we do have spare uniform if any problems.

Our top achieving students this week are:

Georgina Barnes, Isabel Bush, Mia Crowe, Joshua Carter-Strike, Erin O'Neill, Lola Pauling, Mason Perriton, Scarlett Butler, Sophie Swatman and Daniel Smajda. Well done to you all.



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

2. Year 11 News

With the weather a little nicer and day's getting longer it's lovely to see so many Year 11 looking forward to their exciting new chapters in September. A small group of Year 11 students took part in an exciting opportunity called PEAK last week which looks at transition onto their next steps and supporting them with it.

Our Prom Committee have been working very hard looking at fundraising opportunities for our Year 11 prom, so watch this space! They have also been looking into running a sustainability event linked to prom where barely worn dresses and suits can be reused/upcycled to address issues with 'fast fashion'. They would love any donations of appropriate clothing that are looking for a new home.

Our top five LEARN T point students this week are:

Alfie Deadman
Seb Breckons
Alex Money
Ella Ash
Mackenzie Culley

Really well done – keep up the great work!

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

3. 6th Form News

I know that it has been a difficult week for many with the crisis around the world and mainly Ukraine. Many students have asked me how they can help or have told me how upset the news has made them feel. There are lots of local charities and supermarkets that are collecting for the Ukrainian crisis. But further in the medium term...what can you do? Look after your own wellbeing. Leave your phones at home, try not to get far too engulfed in the news, get out of the house, go spend time in nature and with your loved ones. Look after your mind. Focus on your studies and your learning. Aim high and try to succeed into your next stage. And mostly be kind. Be kind to those around you who may be suffering silently or outwardly.

Coping with the news (students and parents - ideas and advice) Mind offered this advice on twitter:

<https://twitter.com/mindcharity/status/1497266560641253381?s=21>

BBC Newsround ideas about coping here:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002#xtor=CS8-1000-%5BPromo_Box%5D-%5BNews_Promo%5D-%20%5BNews_Promo%5D-%5BPS_NEWSROUND~N~~P_AdviceIfYouAreUpsetByTheNews%5D

Attendance and punctuality

Attendance in tutor from 8:40 is a compulsory expectation (unless previously authorised by myself). Students must arrive on site in good time to be in their tutor room ready to answer the register at 8:40. The number of students not emailing myself and Ms Davies when they are absent is also increasing. Please note that they will get an unauthorised absence unless we have heard from you that day. This will eventually result in a meeting with parents.

Dress code

The dress code is essentially our uniform policy. It provides an expectation of dress related to working in a school environment. The overarching statement all students have agreed to abide by is “The overall appearance of an Open Academy Sixth Form student should be smart and appropriate for the workplace.” Some items of clothing that should not be worn are: sliders, ripped jeans, belly (crop) tops. So please be aware that after Easter and as the weather warms the policy has not changed. Students who wear these will be asked to change or leave and return dressed in line with the policy.

Use of Sixth Form spaces after 3:00pm

Sixth Form students are only allowed in staffed areas of the school. This generally means:

- with a teacher in a classroom as per individual needs
- in the futures area if in a hub session with Ms Davies

Students should not be unaccompanied in classrooms or in the futures area without explicit permission beforehand.

PPE2 grades

All Year 12 and 13 should now be aware of their PPE2 grades. Any that are concerned with a low grade need to speak with their teachers about their next steps in improving these before the final PPE3/A level exams coming up after Easter.

London trip

Final payment is today Friday, 11 March. I also need student's behaviour contract signed and returned to me next week. We will all meet one more time next week to go over all details prior to the trip.

UCAS firm and insurance choices

Many students have now made their firm and insurance choices. As the world is opening up again, this is a great opportunity to go and visit some of your university choices.

Making appointments to see Alex/Kelly

If students haven't applied to UCAS, they should consider making an appointment to see our NEACO champion Alex, or our careers advisor Kelly. They can discuss careers and apprenticeship options with you. Please see Ms Davies to book an appointment with one of them.

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

4. Library News

This week we have been celebrating International Women's Day in the library. We are also looking forward to British Science Week which takes place next week. We have put together some recommended books related to these topics. Please see the highlights below:

International Women's Day
Books to educate, challenge & inspire!

Wonder Women
FEM IN ISM is...
girls who code
YOU CAN SAVE THE WORLD
SHOW US WHO YOU ARE
MY NAME IS MALALA
GRETA THUNBERG
MARY FRANKENSTEIN
RUN REBEL
AMAZING work!

www.internationalwomensday.com



These are just a sample of the books we recommend. We encourage students to pop into the library to browse the collections and maybe borrow a book or two.

We are also encouraging students to take part in the British Science Week Poster Competition. Students can speak to Miss Ling, or go to this website: <https://www.britishscienceweek.org/plan-your-activities/poster-competition/> for more information.

Miss Ling
Librarian

5. Cleaner Vacancy

We currently have a vacancy for a cleaner, if you or someone you know might be interested please visit the vacancy page on our website for details

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

Mrs Appleby
Business Manager

6. Careers

On Wednesday this week Year 10 students spent an enjoyable morning at the Norfolk Skills and Careers Festival at the Norfolk Showground. This was the first time we have been able to attend such a large event for over two years and students had lots of fun visiting the impressive array of stands present. They were not only able to meet representatives from local employers, colleges and training providers but also engage in lots of interactive activities and watch displays. All exciting food for thought for students' future pathways!

If you are the parent of a Year 10 student, please encourage them in their search for a Work Experience placement for 4-8 July 2022. This is a great opportunity for students to complement their studies in school with real-life experience of the workplace, the chance to learn new skills and meet new people. Students who are still unsure of how to go about this should speak to either their Tutor, their Skills for Life Teacher or myself.

Parents who are interested in finding out more about the career opportunities and pathways available to their child can access <https://targetcareers.co.uk/>. This new resource is aimed at parents and carers with a dedicated booklet to download for free or read online. It covers apprenticeships, university, finance and much more. Hard copies of this booklet are also available in Reception.

Dr Davies
Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

7. Chaplain's News

Easter Egg Hampers/basket Random Acts of Kindness

Every year at Christmas we always give out hampers as random acts of kindness to our community. It would be great if we could do something similar this Easter with eggs and chocolate. Please could I call on your generosity to donate some eggs or chocolate to this initiative so we can make someone's Easter better. All chocolatey treats can be brought in by yourselves or by students at any time and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Thank you.

This Week's Reflection

Each one of us will face hard and difficult times at many points in our lives. Sometimes the hardships will last for a short while, and other times they seem to go on forever. Even though those moments feel like they are going to break us and we can feel like we are going under, we all have an incredible strength that can push us forward. Having the determination and mindset to persevere can make all the difference.

All of our struggles in life are not fun, and they are definitely not a walk in the park. Personally, I could do without them and have often in the past questioned why they need to happen. Life would be so much easier without problems wouldn't it? But, there is also another question which arises too though. What kind of people would we be if life was problem free? Words like, weak, unthankful, impatient and unempathetic spring to mind.

Think of it this way, problems can be turned around into positivity. Instead of being something that pulls us down, they can be used as a tool to build character in our lives and a way of getting rid of the undesirable traits we can sometimes carry.

There is a verse in the Bible that talks about perseverance in Romans 5:3-4:

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character.

Let's be determined to realise that problems teach us lessons we would not learn when things are going well. Each struggle we overcome is one more that shows us we can make it through anything.

Have a great week. God bless.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain