

Open Academy Update 25 March 2022

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

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

I am so sorry we have not been able to provide a full service this week, but we really have struggled with COVID. It didn't help that we had 4 staff out on a Business and Sport residential trip to London for the 6th Form. However, we made the decision not to cancel it as these students have had no trips for the last couple of years and they really needed an opportunity to look beyond our horizon. I have seen some of the photos though and, judging by everyone's smiles, it looks like it was well worth it for those involved and I can't wait to hear all about it as they return today.

Back here I cannot believe how quickly this half term has flown by and the next time I write it will be as we break for Easter. With that comes the final push for the Year 11 students who can still positively affect their grades with hard work now. We will be encouraging them to get their revision plan and timetable sorted next week ready to maximise their efforts over Easter to ensure they come back still in the habit of working hard. We will be redrafting the timetable regularly to ensure that during this year's extended examination period, Year 11 will be focussed on the examinations that they have left.

Although today – and next Friday, are non-uniform days for charity, I will just thank you that the vast majority of students are getting uniform right at all times. A small number of students in a couple of year groups are still trying to push our boundaries with leggings and hoodies so we really appreciate all you are doing to support us to get this right. As you know we check uniform as students come in each morning and a new wheeze from a very small minority is to arrive late – hoping to avoid uniform checks. I will be writing to parents of those who appear to be using this approach over the next few days to let you know what is happening and to encourage you to discuss this with your child. In order to nip this in the bud, after Easter, children who arrive late without good reason, will spend form time lined up outside the entrance for key messages and information, so their late entrance does not disturb the smooth start to the academy day for the majority.

We hope the students are enjoying their new outdoor play areas at break and lunchtime as we have managed to work out how to open the games area for those wishing to play football etc and a pleasant field area for those just wishing to get some fresh air. As with all things, this change may take a little time for us to get it exactly right, but as ever the students have the opportunity to feedback to us through their year councils.

I would also like to just flag up that we will be changing the order of lunches after Easter to accommodate the longer afternoons required for Year 11 exams. It is likely that we will move Year 11 to join Year 7 on first lunch. We will also look at moving Year 8 to the final lunch for operational reasons regarding the lesson split. I will send a separate letter regarding this in the run up to the holiday next week.

Finally, thank you to all those parents who have been giving us feedback recently. The parent feedback from the transition event was very positive with around 80% of parents sharing that they thought we had supported their children well both during the pandemic and in preparation for their GCSEs. The newsletter feedback was very positive too with a significant number of parents saying they really valued the information we share in this way – not to mention some helpful suggestions that we will work on to improve in the coming weeks. Finally, Mr Wilkinson tells me he has had a significant number of replies regarding our mobile phone suggestion "See it. Hear it. Lose it" with almost all respondents very much in favour of this phone ban – some would like us to go even further. Don't forget, Mr Wilkinson will be available after school on Wednesday to listen to your views on this if you would prefer to pop in and tell us what you think.

So, I will stop there and hope you enjoy the newsletter as you enjoy the sunny weather – and long may it last!

Jon Ford - Principal

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1. Free School Meals

During Year Group Closures

For those students affected by the year group closures during the last 2 weeks and who have been unable to access their free school meal in school on these days, an e-voucher will be issued to be used in a supermarket of your choice.

Free School Meal holiday vouchers

We have been informed by Norfolk County Council that the school holiday free school meal vouchers have now ended, meaning that we are unable to provide free school meal vouchers over the upcoming two-week break.

If you are struggling financially the Norfolk Assistance Scheme is still available:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme>

Mrs Appleby – Business Manager

2. Food Technology

Please find attached the recipe booklets for Year 7, 8 and 9. Students follow these recipes in order and all students cook once every two weeks.

If students don't bring in their ingredients they are expected to bring in a note from home or for someone to have contacted reception/head of year on their behalf. If students come to food tech with no ingredients and no note for two lessons in the academic year, they will be issued a detention. Thank you with your support on this.

Miss Luter - Teacher

3. Year 7 News

In light of the message from Mr Ford last week, a few students have spoken to us about the potential mobile phone ban. Just to clarify, we are not banning students having them entirely, it is just when they are in the academy that they would need to be switched off and out of sight. Students will still be allowed to use their phone on the journey to/from the academy.

A reminder from last weeks' newsletter from Mr Ford, the consultation period will close on Friday, 1 April at 3.00pm. If you would like to comment on the policy change please complete the linked form: <https://forms.office.com/r/hcBi3sknTY>

Over the last week (despite Year 7 not being in the academy on Monday and today) we have still amassed a grand total of 463 achievement points which is amazing – let's keep it up!

Our Top 5 Achieving students this week are:

AJ Bale, Jason Juhasz, Luke Smith, Martha Wardell and Kaitlin Williams. Well done!

Please continue to remind students about being in the correct uniform. Now that the weather is getting warmer, hoodies/sweatshirts and coats should not be being worn inside the academy. In addition to the hoodies and coats, please remind students to bring a re-usable water bottle for them to use throughout the day. Again, there are still students asking for a plastic cup. Thank you for your help on this.

There is a cake and book sale next Tuesday, 29 March) to raise money for the DEC Ukraine Appeal. Please, if possible, encourage students to bring in cakes and money for break and lunchtime on Tuesday. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Finally, keep up the great work, one final week before we break up for Easter!

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 7

Mrs Middleton and Mr Hawkins – Assistant Heads of Year 7

4. Year 8 News

As you are well aware, we have been going through a period of disruption in the last couple of weeks. As such, the year team would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has been understanding and supportive, who has maintained excellent standards of behaviour and effort, and who has continued to work hard to ensure that they are maximising their progress in lessons and remote learning. Things should hopefully be back to normal for a productive final week of term next week, and from then on after the Easter holidays. We would like to extend our thanks to parents/carers for their understanding while we work hard to minimise any disruption.

Just a couple of quick notes:

Firstly, we set high standards with uniform and appearance, and the vast majority always look smart and ready to learn. Following earlier messages, please be aware that as the weather is now looking better, we expect full and proper school uniform to be worn by all students in the year group. We are seeing an increasing number of students wearing rings, bracelets, necklaces, and multiple piercings. Our current appearance policy states that for health and safety reasons, jewellery is not permitted in the academy. The exceptions to this rule are small studs in pierced ears – one in each lower lobe, and a watch. 'Stretcher' type ear studs are not allowed. Facial, including tongue, and body piercings are not permitted in any circumstances whether visible or not. To clarify, the only jewellery permitted is:

- One pair of small studs, one in each lower lobe
- A wristwatch

Secondly, students need to be organised and ready to get to lessons on time, and stay in lessons. For example, make sure that water bottles are filled at break and/or lunchtime. Students should not be asking to leave lessons for things like this.

Next week sees the school looking to raise money for some worthy causes. Starting with a bake sale on Tuesday with proceeds going towards the Ukraine, all donations of cakes welcomed, they will be sold at break/lunch at a reasonable amount. We have also asked for donations of Easter eggs or other Easter goodies to be able to hand out as random acts of kindness to the community. Please can these be bought in on Monday.

We hope that you all enjoy your weekend after the difficulties of this week, and come back ready for one final effort next week,

Mr Crawford and Ms Whitwood – Heads of Year 8

Mrs Lamb – Assistant Head of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

Although a slightly strange week with the year group out of the building on Tuesday and Wednesday, there is a real buzz of learning around the building. Also, with the added excitement of non-school uniform day today, it should be a great end to the week.

Achievement points this count is for only 3 days, but as you can see below each tutor group has seen a marked increase in the amount of points they are receiving. The current tally for this week (only 3 days' worth) is:

AED – 28 (12 more than last week)
LGA – 35 (10 more than last week)
RPH – 16 (3 more than last week)
NST – 41 (15 more than last week)

The vast majority of the year group are making the correct choices in their attitude to learning, this is a result of the dedication, determination and resilience of each individual student. As well as this, it really shows the fantastic levels of support and commitment coming from home. Thank you for your continued support in the learning of our students.

We are trying to follow a clear and consistent approach to the behaviour and learning of Year 9s. This means that when they make the right choice they are rewarded.

When they make the wrong choice, they receive a reminder/warning/last chance/timeout.

- If they get to a timeout they will have a 30-minute detention after school.
- If they receive 2 of these in a day then they have a 1hr detention after school.
- If they do not attend their 30-minute detention they will have a 1hr detention the next day.
- If they miss this 1hr detention (DT) they will receive 1 more chance to attend the detention the following day.
- If they still fail to attend they will spend the next day in isolation (work will be provided as well as time for a break and lunch).

EXAMPLE: 30 min DT on Monday, missed = 1hr DT Tuesday, missed = 1hr DT Wed, missed = Isolation Thurs.

EXAMPLE: 1hr (2x30 min DTs) DT on Mon, missed = 1hr DT Tues, missed = Isolation Wed.

We will let you know via text about detentions and if they have to be isolated we will let you know.

If a student cannot complete a detention for a known reason we need to be informed with a note from home, then the detention can happen the next day.

This will not affect the vast majority of the year group as most never get anywhere near a timeout and are performing and succeeding fantastically in their learning

If you wish to know more then please get in contact with either Mr Pickup or Mrs Smith.

Students will have Hub sessions on their timetable. These are considered to be a lesson and as such need to be attended, if missed it will have a negative effect on the student's attendance. If students truant/miss a hub session they will receive a detention unless a reason is given from home.

It is at this time when some fantastic learning can take place, as there are never many in the group and students have the opportunity to catch up with missed learning or get future homework completed.

If they arrive and there is no work for them to complete they will be allowed to leave, but they must get registered first.

Hopefully next week will be a full week for Year 9 before the 2-week break. Friday, 1 April is also a non-school uniform day and we will be back open for students on Wednesday, 20 April. I hope you all have a amazing weekend and enjoy the fabulous weather.

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

6. Rhine, Germany Trip

A reminder for the Year 8s and 9s going on the German trip. If students have not yet accessed the Rhine Trip channel on Teams, can they please do so and add a comment.

Also, a reminder that the second instalment of £110 was due on the 18 March. If you need to pay this later for any reason, please contact me via email (sam.mcevoy@open-academy.org.uk)

Mrs McEvoy - Teacher

7. Year 10 News

The sun has been shining this week and it finally feels like Spring is here. It's been a mixed week with students at home Monday and Thursday. Hopefully the last week of term will be more settled and everyone back in school for the whole week and nice and healthy for the Easter break.

There will be lots of fundraising going on today and next week. It was non-school uniform today and next Friday for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh students who are fund raising for their expedition –proceeds going to that and the prom fund. Year 11s are holding an Easter egg raffle and charging 25p per ticket, and £1 for a strip. Please contribute if you can as this time next year we will be asking students for their support for our school prom! As you know time is flying past really quickly.

There is also an anti-bullying poster competition with a £25 prize, so please do encourage your child to get involved – entry has a small fee. We will also be having a book and cake sale for a few lunchtimes during the next week or two to raise money for the Ukraine Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) fund so if you would like to contribute then please feel free via your child.

The students that gained the most achievement points this week are: Mia Crowe, Gerrard Sandell, Jude Abramson, Tommy Bluett, Joshua Carter-Strike, Bradley Copping, Gera Dergacovs, Katie Edge, Atanas Kyurkchiev, Summer MacCormack, Owen Middleton, Zac Skells and Teyla Young.

Toby Cane, Tommy Bluett, Isla Gardner, Erin O'Neill and Kelsey Holman attended the Future Forward Research project showcase last night at the UEA. The evening gave the students the chance to present their research projects which they've been working on over the last few months. We were extremely impressed with their research and presenting skills and their presentations definitely gave everyone food for thought. Well done to you all – we are very proud of you.



The boys football team are playing their semi-final on Tuesday at home against Hellesdon. Please come along and support if you can at 3.30 pm.

As the weather gets warmer please encourage your child to bring in a refillable water bottle and no hoodies please.

Mr Lambert – Head of Year 10

Mrs Roe – Assistant Head of Year 10

8. System Issue Year 11 Reports

There have been a large number of reports sent out to parents this year for all years. On a recent one for Year 11 the communication between our management information system and the app you access the reports failed. This caused a small number of grades to be altered as the two systems (operated by the same company) didn't talk to each other properly. We raised a complaint and are awaiting an answer. In the meantime, we have checked that there are no issues our end. We checked the marking and data entry by staff. That was all good. We have checked the programming we did and there was no issue. Since then we have created a new report and overwritten the old work. This appears to have worked until we hear back from SIMS our provider.

I am terribly sorry about the error. It was impossible to check or predict from the software we have. I expect that the glitch will be fixed in a patch in the coming days. It might be that this is also why the Year 9 parents' evening booking system did not work.

Mr Ward – Vice Principal

9. Year 11 News

Another great week for the Year 11s – there has been some wonderful planning for fund raising for our prom and lots of hard work in lessons and Hubs. A reminder that the prom committee will be selling raffle tickets next week for our Easter Egg Raffle for prom.

Hubs become optional for Year 11s after the Easter break, but I would strongly encourage students to continue to use the expertise and guidance of their teachers and go to the Hubs as required. Hubs are a great way of students revising in small groups with friends and getting that extra help from their teachers.

I hope the students have been finding the revision packs we sent home with them useful, if any feel they need some extra help with how to revise, please ask them to speak to their tutor.

Our top 5 LEARNT point achievers this week are:

Joseph Sizer

Charlie Thompson

Melissa Mills

Zak Pitts

Mia Baxter

Well done!

Mrs Clayton – Head of Year 11

Mrs Roberts – Assistant Head of Year 11

10. Library

Next term we are going to be adding a new club- Warhammer Club- to our schedule (more details about this to follow.) To be able to offer this we have had to think about our current club provision and have made the decision not to run Manga Club after Easter. Students are of course still welcome to use the library and run their own Manga related activities, but this will not be a scheduled event next term. That being said, we

want to end on a high note so we are inviting all students who are interested in Manga to join us for a final club meeting after school on Friday, 1 April where there will be games and fun activities. We anticipate that Manga Club will return next school year as part of a rotating club schedule. If students have any comments or feedback, they can come and speak to me at any time.

Miss Ling – Librarian

11. Careers

- If you have a child who is a budding aviator or pilot, please make them aware of this amazing opportunity to get free flight experience.
 - **The Aviatrix Project** is a charity that encourages young people, particularly young women to take a career path in the aviation industry. They have **12 Taster flights** available for students in Norfolk this year.
- The following taster flights and experiences are now open for applications. The aim of the flights are to assist anyone, who might otherwise not have the necessary resources, to experience flying.
 - 12 Taster flights with Flying Made Easy at Old Buckenham Airfield
 - 12 Taster flights with Take Flight Aviation at Enstone Airfield
 - 20 737 Simulator flight with an instructor with FlightPad at The University of West London
 - 2 FlightPad memberships for 6 months
- They are for aspiring pilots of both genders aged 14 and above with no upper age limit. **Closing date is 12 noon on Monday 18th April 2022.** Winners will be announced in May 2022.
- Visit the website for more details and how to apply - <http://www.theaviatrixproject.com/taster-flights-experiences-2022>
- If you are interested in finding out more about the choices and opportunities your child may have in the future, take a look at free careers website **Career Pilot**. The site is aimed at young people and their parents and offers lots of clear information aimed at helping you understand subjects such as GCSE Options, Sixth Form, University, Apprenticeships and Traineeships. To find out more go to <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/parent-zone>

Dr Davies
Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

12. 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

A case of Mistaken Identity

In my reflection today, I want to start off with a story. This is supposedly a true account recorded in the Sarasota Police Dept, Florida in the US. An elderly lady was out shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of stealing her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs: "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!" The four men didn't wait for a second threat. They got out and ran like mad.

The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition.

She tried and tried, and then she realised why. It was for the same reason she had wondered why there was a football, a frisbee and two 12-packs of beer in the front seat. A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces along. She loaded her bags into the car and drove to the police station to report her mistake.

The sergeant to whom she told the story couldn't stop laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale men were reporting a car-jacking by a mad, elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, with glasses, curly white hair and a large handgun. No charges were filed.

This story is a case of mistaken identity. Life, ourselves and some people can label us up in a negative way. They can label us up as stupid, insignificant, will never amount to anything, a bad father, bad mother, unlucky, bad leader, a failure and lots of other negative names. We often hear the words "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me". I have to say this is one of the most untruthful phrases I have ever heard. Words do stick and they do hurt us, they even go so far as to shape our lives if we let them.

Whatever negative names life or other people are calling us, that's not who we are. It's a case of mistaken identity. Our real identity is successful, we are winners not failures, we are not stupid, we are everything positive. That's who we are.

In closing, the Bible encourages us with this. It says "No negative thing brought against you will prosper and every voice that rises up against you, you will condemn".

This week, look in the mirror and call yourself names, positive ones that is. Label yourself in a positive way because that's who you are.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain