

Open Academy Update 29 April 2022

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

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome to our newsletter this week.

We are well and truly in to the summer term now and as we are finally able to start our assembly program in person again, I have taken the opportunity to reflect on where we have been as an academy, how we have improved and then to look at where we are going next. I thought you may be interested in that quick overview too so I will summarise the key messages below.

Over the last two or three years – despite the pandemic - we have taken big steps forward to improve the academy

- Our curriculum has been fully reviewed and improved, we now provide knowledge organisers for key stage 3 and assessment folders for marked work in all key stages.
- We have gone from around 10-15% of students completing around 1.5 to 2 hours of homework per week 2 years ago to over 75% completion of all homework with an expectation of national average 4.5 hours per week for all.
- We have been developing the Open Way To Teaching and Learning which uses best practice research to help students learning through a cycle of: frequent practice recall, clear explanation, modelling, examples and then opportunities to practice and apply new knowledge.
- We simplified our Inclusive Open Way Behaviour policy based on support and with the three clear rules of being ready, safe and respectful, and introduced a behaviour for learning training program based on LEARNT (Listen, Engage, Ask & Answer, Respect, Now be 'present' and Teamwork). All our positive behaviour points in lessons are gained from this program and these points feed into a new refreshed rewards program.
- We have introduced and developed a new pastoral system, which has year teams consisting of assistant heads of year / heads of year and tutors.
- We have significantly more support in lessons.
- We have widened the curriculum to include more trips visits and activities (COVID permitting) and introduced an EBacc expectation at key stage 4.
- Our statistics tell us there is much less bullying and less distraction in lessons.
- We promote and support diversity through our student lead Unite Open and Open LGBTQ+ groups to help everyone feel welcome.
- We have developed an 'it can happen here' approach to sexual harms, and through both pastoral support and our skills for life curriculum we have worked hard to ensure that everyone has someone they can go to if they feel they have been treated inappropriately.
- Thanks to our lockdown work on tracking progress and our continued use of TEAMS for homework, we became a Microsoft Showcase school – one of less than 50 in the country who go through the rigorous assessment process.

Which altogether feels like a lot of positive progress! I also outlined in my assemblies how we are changing now for improvement including:

- Mobile phones – back to the future – we will be rigorously reinforcing our long-standing mobile phone policy.
- Outdoor space – we hope students enjoy using the better spaces outdoors this summer, but please respect the space – stay clear of the pond and fence around it.
- Green card tweaks – this is the way we try to support students who are struggling – we have introduced a few tweaks to improve how it works.
- Uniform tweak – thanks to a successful campaign by the student leaders at Open Voice, our academy council, if you are allowed a nose piercing, you may wear one stud in the academy.
- More awards and rewards – we will be holding a key stage 3 awards ceremony this term – COVID permitting – and we will continue with the new breakfast and lunch rewards for highest attendance and highest achievement points.

We know that we still have much to do, but as we get on top of lesson behaviour, homework and uniform, it is right that we continue to improve as above starting with phone use.

I have also asked Mr Ward to reflect on some of our successes as we return from the pandemic and you will find his thoughts below and attached with the newsletter.

I will go back to the more day to day next week, but I hope you have found this reminder / update helpful – and as always, I am keen to hear your feedback. On that note, after a suggestion from a parent that we might provide some training around some key issues for parents – like autism or child mental health, I am investigating what we might be able to offer and would be delighted to hear what you think of the suggestions – or indeed which courses we should be offering – for now that is quite enough from me – so please do enjoy the rest of this newsletter.

Jon Ford – Principal

Contents:

- 1. Open Success**
- 2. Year 7**
- 3. Year 8**
- 4. Year 9**
- 5. Year 10**
- 6. Year 11**
- 7. Rhine Valley Trip**
- 8. Open Academy Allotment**
- 9. Library**
- 10. Careers**
- 11. Attendance**
- 12. Chaplain's Reflection**

1. Open Success

Year 7 and 9

The next round of GL Assessments will take place in June. There will be written reports on the progress of all pupils this year with targets on how to improve in maths and English. These will supplement the full reports. Pupils can revise or catch up using knowledge organisers. There is a new one every half term. By the end of the year there will be 6 documents clearly showing everything that has been taught in the year. Where students are not making enough progress overall additional support e.g. compulsory HUB sessions are put in place.

Year 8

We are compiling the results from the last set of assessments. Due to the pandemic there was higher than usual absence of pupils and we are trying to catch those pupils up. Reports will follow in the coming weeks.

Year 9

Options forms are being collected. There was a confusion with a minority of pupils regarding choice. It is government policy and expectation that students follow the EBacc and therefore it would be a very unusual situation for a particular pupil not to be studying English, maths, science, German, and a humanity (history or geography). To be clear those circumstances would be learning needs i.e. a special educational need rather than preference. It was different in the past. Where there is freedom to choose pupils have 12 GCSEs to pick from. The most popular 10 will run.

Year 10

Year 10 are taking doing assessments during May. Reports will follow at the end of the month. Those not on track will be added to compulsory HUB sessions to catch up.

Year 11

Before half term the timetable will adapt slightly to enable students to be with key teachers before exams. After half term some subjects will be completed and therefore more timetable changes will be done in order to maximise the time the students can spend with the key teacher. It is not possible to be perfect due to teachers having multiple exam groups and the exams themselves making timetabling challenging. However, if we can squeeze an extra hour or two work in we will do so. Please be mindful that the disruption will lead to pupils being with their teachers more often.

Details of the internship programme and work experience are being finalised. Exciting times ahead...

Sixth Form

So many of you are taking exams for the first time now. Please be mindful of each other and where someone needs support make sure we are aware. It is sometimes not easy to spot worries when you are studying at home! Email your teachers so that you can get answers to questions you may have.

Mr Ward – Vice Principal

2. Year 7

After the first full week back, it is great to see so many students coming in with the correct uniform. Both Mrs Pearsall and Mr Hawkins spoke about how smart Year 7 looked in their assembly this morning with Mr Ford. Let's hope this continues!

A reminder from last week, that we are going to be implementing a "If we see it. If we hear it. You lose it" approach to mobile phones within the academy from next week. Students have been informed of this and have adhered well so far. Students are still able to have their phones with them on their journeys to/from the academy, but will need to be switched off, and in their bags whilst on site.

Again, with the weather warming up, (not that it seems like it this week!) coats and hoodies should not be worn inside the building. However, a navy/black sweatshirt may be worn outside for PE lessons.

On that note, despite multiple reminders, some students are still not bringing in a re-useable bottle. Therefore, please remind students to bring a re-usable bottle so that they can continue to stay hydrated throughout the day.

Our Top 5 Achieving students this week are:

Ada Anil, Nyomi Harris, Alex Martin, Annalee Robinson, and Kate Skedge. Well done!

On Monday, 25 April, a group of Year 7s helped with the preparation and clearing of the academy's allotment. They worked incredibly hard, and it is looking great already. There is a small group of volunteers who are going to help after school during the weeks ahead, but please speak to Mrs Pearsall/Mr Mundy if anybody else is interested in helping out after school.

Finally, keep up the great work this term!

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 7

Mrs Middleton & Mr Hawkins – Assistant Heads of Year 7

3. Year 8

After the holidays, and a shorter first week last week, it has been good to get properly back in the swing of things this week. As always, the vast majority of Year 8 have been motivated to do their best and maximise their progress, and have shown dedication, determination, resilience, and an excellent attitude towards their lessons. With the bank holiday this weekend, and a shorter week to follow, this half-term is going to fly by... and we will soon be hitting Year 9!

We are always proud to be associated with this year group, and genuinely believe that we set the standards in the school for behaviour and progress. It is absolutely vital that we continue this, and strive to

be even better, in order to ensure that the very best personal and academic standards and development can be achieved. As such, we would like to ask students to think about their strengths and areas for development, and identify one area where they think they can push themselves to achieve even more. A target could be as simple as putting up your hand every lesson, asking a teacher a question about their subject inside or outside of the classroom each day, or looking to raise your average homework score by one point. Setting your own goals, and reflecting on how this can impact on your confidence and understanding, is a powerful tool both at school and in the world beyond.

Praise for our students this week comes with special mentions for: Jacob Delf and Katy Sutherland for outstanding contributions in class, which are thoughtful, well-developed, and intelligently explained; Luke Edge for his resilience and determination in lessons; Thomas Hardy, Tyler Paul, Lucy-Rose Brown, and Ruby Anderson for their willingness to take risks to develop their learning and understanding; Amy Toms for her increasing confidence in sharing and explaining her opinions.

A few reminders going forward to next week:

Seeing Mrs Lamb – Mrs Lamb is incredibly busy. You should speak to her before school, or in social times if you need to speak to her, or arrange a time to speak to her. She has now added a sign-up sheet on her office door: if you go to the office and she is not there, write your name on the sheet and return/go to your lesson. Mrs Lamb will be aware that you wish to speak to her, and will come to you when she is able.

Phones – students have responded extremely well to the re-introduction of the phones policy. Posters are due to be going up around the school to reinforce this. Phones should be turned off and placed in students' bags, not in pockets. We are thankful to parents and guardians for their support of this policy, which is designed to keep you safe, happy, and focused on learning in school.

Break time – please remember to stay away from the nature area and the fences at break time. Ball games should be played on the hard courts only. There are deer living in the nature area who we want to take care of, and not worry or disturb, and we need to make sure that there is no possibility of any balls going out on to the main road.

Uniform expectations – these are simple and clear and have been communicated. The vast majority get them right every day. Everyone can get them right every day.

Thank you for your hard work, and enjoy the long weekend.

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

4. Year 9

The first full week done of this new half term and it has been a busy one, with a fire drill yesterday and parents evening on Tuesday. We now have a 3-day weekend thanks to the Monday bank holiday, so we will be welcoming back the year group on Tuesday, 3 May. Also, the options forms have now been given out to the year group in their lessons. Students can now complete these and hand them back into school.

Learnt points - the points keep coming with a great improvement on last week. The current tally for this week is:

AED – 46
LGA – 69
RPH – 41
NST – 95 (fantastic effort)

Hubs are again running, but now just once a week for each student who is timetabled to go. Please check your child's timetable to know when they are meant to be attending. If they miss a session they will be receiving a 30-minute detention the next day. These sessions are important to ensure all students complete

their courses. If they have no work to complete then they will just need to get registered at Hub and then they will be able to leave.

There has been a growing concern with online safety in regards to mobile phones at school. Some students have been using them inappropriately by taking photos of others without permission, others have been sharing videos online. This now means that the school has returned to its previous policy towards phones, where they should not be seen or heard while in the building. If you need to contact your child whilst at school please do so via reception or Mrs Smith. Please do not contact your child directly as this could get them into trouble or at the least distract them from their learning. Please allow us to contact you if there is something we need to share or inform you about your child as well, for example if they are ill and need to come home. If you have any questions please get in contact with either Mrs Smith or Mr Pickup.

The options process has now fully begun with forms being distributed to students this week. Students will need to have a last think about the choices they want to make before completing their forms. These will then be handed back into the Mrs Smith in the Year 9 office. If you have any questions then please get in contact with either the subject teacher or Mrs Smith. These forms are NOT first come first serve so you do not need to worry about getting them back to us as quickly as possible.

We hope you are looking forward to a great 3-day weekend and the shorter coming week, after which we will be basically half way through this half term. Thank you again for all your great support.

Mr Pickup – Head of Year 9

Mrs Smith – Assistant Head of Year 9

5. Rhine Valley Trip

Final call for those students who are travelling on the collective passport.

Please make sure the student passport form has been signed and returned, and they have paid their £5 contribution, by Wednesday, 4 May if students wish to be included on the collective passport. Please email me if you are in any doubt as to whether your child needs to be included on this passport.

Ms Stickland - Teacher

6. Year 10

Much colder weather week this week, I just hope that the sun is back out again soon. It's been a long week with the Year 10s completing all their assessment, a massive thank you goes out to all them for their efforts since they've come back from Easter, their next assessments will be in Year 11 preparing them for their GCSE almost this time next year, I know it has flown by.

The students that gained the most achievement points this week are: Jude Abramson, Joshua Carter-Strike, Eadie Ambrozevich, Mason Perriton, William Orr, Owen Middleton, Mia Crowe, Zac Skells and Teyla Young.

Both Year 10 photography class have been out on a trip to the Norwich cathedral today and on their return it sounded they had a great time, there's another trip next Thursday for the art and triple science classes going to Cambridge museum of zoology, any information about the trip get in touch with either Mr Murray or Mr Walters.

A reminder that we are now enforcing our mobile phone policy of if we see it or hear it then students' mobile phones will be taken away from them. Please remind your child to keep their mobiles in their bags switched off – thank you.

Work experience forms need to be handed in ASAP – please encourage your child to find a placement and get their forms in.

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

7. Year 11

Another wonderful week for the Year 11s with many working so hard in preparation for their exams. We start next week with our new ban on mobile phones, so please remind your child their phone needs to be in their bag and they are not allowed to use it during the school day. If you need to contact your child for any reason, please call the Year Office and we will get a message to them.

Our top 5 students for LEARNT points this week are:

Cintia Cardoso
Alfie Deadman
Chloe Smith
Lola Cook
Gabe Morgan
Well done!

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

8. Open Academy Allotment

Following recent years our academy allotment area became over-grown and we are pleased to say that we have received help from a local charity 'The Papillon Project' who have begun to work with our students to help transform the area into a space for all to enjoy.

A group of 15 Year 7 students did a fantastic job, clearing this area on Monday ready for use again this year. We would welcome any parents that would like to help with the running and maintenance of the allotment space to get involved!

Mr Mundy - Teacher

9. Library

The Carnegie and Greenaway Book Award

We have officially begun shadowing the Carnegie and Greenaway book awards this week. The annual awards, which have been running for 86 years, showcase and celebrate outstanding books for young people.

Students are being invited to have their say by reading the 8 shortlisted books, sharing their thoughts, and following along with the official voting process as part of our shadowing group. Our Year 7 students are being invited to follow along with the Greenaway award that focuses on illustration in books, while the remaining year groups are encouraged to join in with the Carnegie award that focuses on outstanding writing.*

You can view this year's shortlisted titles below and visit the official website for more information: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/>. Students who would like to take part should see me.

*Some titles may not be suitable for all readers, for personal advice and recommendations please see me.



Miss Ling – Librarian

10. Careers

The deadline for Year 10 students to return their work experience placement forms for processing has been extended by one week to Friday 6 May. If you have a child in Year 10 who is still arranging their placement for the week commencing 4th July (Monday to Friday) please encourage them to return their form to Dr Davies (S12) by this date at the absolute latest.

University Technical College Norfolk (Old Hall Road, Norwich) are hosting a STEM careers fair on Thursday, 12 May 2022 from 4-6pm. This will be of particular interest to students and their families who are interested in pursuing a career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths as well as scientific careers in the Health Industries. To register please go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/303564739307>

An exciting opportunity for a Year 11 or Year 13 student is currently available with local employer CTS. They are a structural engineering drawing office based on Hill House Road in Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich and have a position (or maybe two) available for a trainee/apprentice. They are looking for a school or sixth form leaver who is interested in Computer Aided Design within the Construction Industry. They are keen to recruit locally and are contacting all high schools and sixth forms in the area. The company specialise in 3D modelling of steel frame buildings of all types and sizes as well as architectural steelwork such as stairs and balconies. They work for structural engineers and steel manufacturers both locally and nationally. All training will be provided in house to BCSCA (British Constructional Steel Association) guidelines.

Unfortunately, there are no government or Construction Industry Training Board apprenticeship schemes covering our trade and there are no qualifications to be gained. This is however, a much in demand skill and the experience gained will be invaluable within the construction industry. The job is mostly office based, but they do carry out measurement surveys so there would be a requirement for construction site visits on occasion. This provides the opportunity to train in the use of Total Station electronic distance and level measurement equipment.

Their website is at [www.cts-steeldetailing.co.uk]www.cts-steeldetailing.co.uk and any student in Years 11 or 13 should contact Tim Garrod on TimGarrod@hillhousenorwich.co.uk to discuss the position.

Dr Davies
Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

11. Attendance

Contact Information

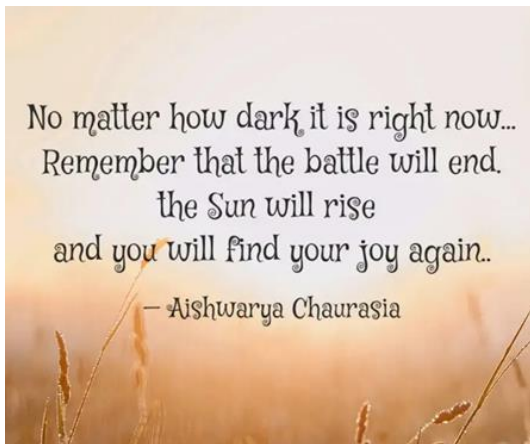
In order to keep our records up to date, please ensure that we have your correct contact details including mobile telephone and new address, especially if this has recently been changed. Many thanks.

Leavers

Hollie Taylor, Cara Tipple and Lillymae Hogarth. We wish them all the best for the future.

Mrs Ganson – Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's Reflection



Have a great week, you are all in my prayers. God bless.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain