

Open Academy Update 14 October 2022

Dear parents/carers and students

Welcome to this week's newsletter. I am delighted to be back after my brief newsletter holiday last week as I was away on the Anglican Association of Secondary Schools Headteacher conference in London. It was a great 3 days for reflection of the theme of flourishing together and I have returned both refreshed and encouraged in the work we do here at the academy. All schools have challenges and we are no exception. However, I am heartened by the day-to-day care and effort that the Open Academy educators put in every day across the full spectrum of staff.

I have mentioned before that I am really keen to offer you a range of opportunities to engage with us this year and I am delighted to highlight the work Mr Thompson has been co-ordinating across all subjects in Year 7, 8 and 9 to encourage and support you to get involved in your child's learning and revision.

Our students have full access to the Seneca online learning platform, including premium content and we encourage students to use these materials in addition to their class learning and homeworks, to revise for test and assessments and to review recent learning. This represents a perfect opportunity for you to spend time with your child to see what they are learning and as the activities are marked instantly, to see for yourself how your child is getting on. The majority of students enjoy the Seneca tasks.

There is a note from Mr Thompson later in the bulletin on how to get started and a convenient QR code link to get you going. Please do let us know how you get on with these resources – we think it could give you lots of opportunities to work together with your child to really understand what they are doing in their lessons at the academy.

The Seneca system comes with tools for parents to be able to see at a glance how your child is getting on too, so hopefully this will prove valuable to all our parents and students.

Don't forget to let me know what sessions you would be interested in attending as we pull together a parent support program from next term.

The first support session of the year will be **next Tuesday evening, 18 October from 5.30pm for parents of Year 11 students**. This study skills event is aimed at helping parents and carers of Year 11 students through their GCSE year. There will be sessions from various subjects along with general advice and support around managing the stresses and challenges of GCSEs. We hope to see all Year 11 and their parents/carers at what promises to be a very useful event.

For efficiency we added our **6th Form open evening on to the same night, Tuesday, 18 October** as the study skills evening so we hope many of you will chose to stay on after the study skills event and find out more about how our small 'boutique' Sixth Form can meet the needs of your child post 16. An email regarding this event has been sent today.

Finally, this week Mrs Hewitt-Coleman our SENCO has found an interesting pack about talking to your child and supporting them to become body confident from Dove. I will be interested to get your feedback on whether this is a useful pack, so please do see the attached and let us know what you think.

I stop there and invite you to enjoy the rest of this newsletter – it's good to be back!

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Seneca

SENECA is the adaptive learning platform used at Open Academy and we have paid for our learners to use Seneca Premium for revision in Year 7, 8 and 9. Amazing, but what does that mean for you?

Scientific methodology to boost learning. Seneca's assignments are based on neuroscience, written by experts and academically proven to double students' outcomes. They also help parents how to support learning!

Not only are they fun and effective, but they are intelligent too! The Seneca algorithm analyses each pupil's answer and adjusts their learning path in real-time, optimizing their studies.

Exclusive tools for parents:

Parental engagement has a significant positive effect on learning outcomes. Supporting your child with their studies begins with knowing how they're doing. With Seneca Premium, you can easily monitor your child's learning and identify their weaknesses and strengths in each subject and help them progress.

Make it a Seneca Sunday and spend 15 minutes learning with the ones you love!



Mr Thompson
Teacher

2. Year 7

As the students approach the end of their first half-term at secondary school, I'm so pleased to see that they have settled in well and the overwhelming majority are being a credit to both parents and the school.

I hope the students are getting used to doing their homework, but if there are any remaining teething issues, please let the year office know.

Our Top 5 LEARNT point achievers for this week are:

Destiny O	31
Skye H	29
Amy J	24
Taylor G	23
Ella S	23

Keep up the good work!

Mrs Clayton (Head of Year)
Mrs Roberts (Assistant Head of Year)

3. Year 8

Well done to the following students for gaining the greatest number of achievement points:

Ada A, Kayden SH, Reece Y, Oliver N, Alfie S, Somaya R, Jason J and Mia P.

Mrs Pearsall (Head of Year)

Mrs Middleton (Assistant Head of Year)

4. Year 9

Well done for another strong week of engagement, learning and progress. The year group has had a really positive feel to it this week, which is excellent to see as we come towards the end of the half-term. Special praise this week for:

Katy S, Lily-Mae H, Harley R and Lucy-Rose B for working above and beyond with their creative writing in English – Mrs Clayton;

A big shout out for Kyran G and David C who performed a great fight in drama on Wednesday - Mrs Ormosi;

I started A* reading intervention this week with 6 year 9 students. Lily N and Ruby A were fantastic! Callum W also joined in at the end – Mrs Tyler;

Keeley Y for perseverance and Lola B for insight and good humour - Mr Edwards, English;

Keeley Y, Warren M and Ellie for their hard work both individually and helping others in DT today - Miss Rednall;

Maddison G, Tyler P, and Lily-Anna N for consistently high effort in lessons, and Latifa C for showing the biggest improvement in her recent assessment – Mrs Power, Maths;

Jacob D for his great teamwork in food tech – Mrs Day;

Shout out for Areen M A and George T-S for being brilliant quizzers in German – Mrs McEvoy.

- Some students have acquired minutes late to lessons or truancy marks. Can you please remind your child how important it is to be on time and attend lessons.
- By being late or truanting lessons means students will find it difficult to keep up with school work and so may fall behind.
- Poor attendance patterns can also make life difficult later when a child is ready to look for a job
- Research also shows that students who regularly attend lessons achieve five good GCSEs grades.

Enjoy the weekend,

Mr Crawford and Ms Whitwood (Heads of Year)

Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year)

5. Year 10 GCSEs

Year 10 have completed several weeks of their new GCSE courses. They have settled in really well. A small number of students changed their minds about their choices in the first week or two. We swapped them over and all seems good. This week another couple of students had slight wobbles about their courses. It is normal. However, as we all know the longer we leave it the harder it becomes to catch up. I have approved the most recent changes after checking with staff that the student can catch up. Those students are on a lesson or two trial to see how it goes before finalising. We are probably at the stage

where grades would be negatively affected by changing options and so requests will almost certainly be denied unless there is a specific education need that drives the change.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Year 10s for their maturity during this whole process. It is no small matter determining options – for many it is the biggest decision since picking a high school. We all know that what you choose at GCSE does not determine your life, however getting the best possible grades really does help.

Mr Ward
Vice Principal

6. Year 10

Learnt points: The current tally for this week is:

RPH – 29
NST – 26
AED – 39
ABL – 27

Attendance: Current attendance for Year 9 is 92.66%. Holding firm from the last week. If not in school please send in evidence (this could be a photograph of the medicine given).

Late to learning: In the last week Year 10 have missed 382 mins of learning due to turning up to their lessons late. This is a decrease of 110 minutes from last week. If your son/daughter has been late you will receive a text message on Friday to let you know of their detention.

Fantastic Learners: A great big congratulations from the maths department to all Year 10 who have been showing how amazing they can be when in lessons and learning. Well done and keep it up.

Once again thank you for all your support. It is only with this joint team effort that all students are given the tools and strategies to succeed.

Mr Pickup (Head of Year)
Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year)

7. Year 11

Just one week until we break for our first half term, time is going so quickly already. We had our first Prom committee this week and many of our Year 11s are very excited and have given lots of good ideas to help raise money for the event.

It is the Exam Success and 6th Form open evening on Tuesday, 18 October and more detail can be seen below:

Exam Success and 6th Form Evening - 5.30pm - open to invited year 11 and 13.

- 15/20 mins presentation in the lecture theatre (exam structure/revision tools/teacher support "what it looks like")
- Students/parents will have an option on three further presentations run by Mrs Wenlock, Mr Lambert, Miss Molloy, Mr Ward and Mr Ford
- Study skills (Mrs Wenlock)
- Organisation (Miss Molloy and Mr Lambert)
- Internship (Mr Ward)
- Stress management (Mr Ford and Mr Richardson)
- Stalls in atrium with teachers with revision guides and resources and available to discuss revision with parents etc. (other stalls will be available that are set up for the open evening)

- 6.30pm to 7.30pm open evening. (subjects in their faculty area)

Mr Lambert (Head of Year)

Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year)

8. Library

Emails

This week we have introduced automated emails to students regarding overdue library books. This is an easy way for students to keep on top of their library account. If a student has an overdue book, they will receive a weekly email (to their school email address) until the book has been renewed or returned. Students can return books at any time using the drop box by the library entrance.

If a student believes they have received a message in error, or they have lost a book, we ask that they come and speak to me in the first instance. Please be aware that these emails are sent directly from our library management software and cannot be replied to. If you need to get in touch with me, please call via reception or email library@open-academy.org.uk

We are aware that some students may have received multiple emails this week due to a technical issue while we were setting up the software. Please accept our apologies for this.

Halloween Kahoot

Next Friday our Library Leaders will be running a Halloween themed Kahoot quiz at lunch. If students are interested in taking part, they should visit the library to sign up. Places will be offered on a first come, first serve basis.

Mrs Gunton

Librarian

9. Careers

Please take a few minutes to look at the new 'live' careers newsletter. The aim is to bring together events and information from across the school so that you can see at glance how career guidance works at Open Academy. The newsletter is updated each week and is also available on our website:

<https://padlet.com/carolinedavies3/1ztsr3hkr8syd7ew>

Dr Davies

Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

10. Attendance

Just to remind you that if you have any changes to contact numbers, address etc, please let us know as soon as possible, in order that these details can be updated on our system.

Please continue to use our student absence email address to notify us of any absences, appointments etc. student.absence@open-academy.org.uk

If you are intending taking your son/daughter out during term time i.e. holiday, please complete an absence in term time form (available from reception) prior to the absence. Many thanks.

Mrs Ganson

Attendance Officer

11. Chaplain's Reflection

An inspirational story for us all this week and encouragement to keep going for it in life

There was a young woman who took great pride in the growth and care of the flowers in her flower garden.

One day while looking through a flower catalogue she often ordered from, a picture of a plant immediately caught her eye. She had never seen blooms on a flower like that before. "I have to have it," she said to herself, and she immediately ordered it.

When it arrived, she already had a place prepared to plant it. She planted it at the base of a stone wall at the back of her yard. It grew vigorously, with beautiful green leaves all over it, but there were no blooms. Day after day she continued to cultivate it, water it, feed it, and she even talked to it attempting to coax it to bloom. But, it was to no avail.

One morning several weeks later she contemplated how disappointed she was that her plant had not bloomed. She was giving considerable thought to cutting it down and planting something else in its place.

It was at this point that her neighbour, whose property joined hers, called over to her. "Thank you so much! You can't imagine how much I have enjoyed the blooms of that vine you planted." The young woman walked through the gate into her neighbour's garden, and sure enough, she saw that on the other side of the wall the vine was filled with blooms.

There were indeed the most beautiful blooms she had ever seen. The vine had crept through the crevices and it had not flowered on her side of the fence, it had flowered beautifully on the other side.

Every day we work hard at life and sometimes we don't see results. I just want to encourage you with this. Just because we cannot see the good results of our labour, does not mean that it has not produced fruit.

Your life is making a difference. God bless.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain