

Open Academy Newsletter 10 February 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

It is hard to believe that we are already at half term. Yes, January did indeed seem like it went on for ever, however the last couple of weeks have flown by.

I am sure Year 11 are noticing the pace quickening every day as their GCSEs approach. However there is more rehearsal for them to 'learn their lines' in the form of the second set of pre-public exams (PPE – mocks as we used to call them) straight after half term. I know for some students PPE1 was a bit of a wake-up call, so I hope they spend at least some of their half term getting some revision done. We know it is necessary to relax too, so I think the best advice will be to plan for work and rest!

I am so sorry to have sprung the non-uniform day on you at the last minute this week, but watching reports from the earthquake in Turkey, I really felt we needed to do what we can, so please accept my thanks for everyone who has donated to the fund already through the parent pay app for non-uniform day. If you did want to donate more there are a number of charity options and we will be sending the donation to the British Red Cross Appeal. If you wanted to add more please do, you could use this link:

<https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal> or any of the main relief charities. Your generosity is appreciated.

Moving on, I am hoping that you have felt that we have been a bit more accessible this year already – with two parent engagement events already under our belt. The next session will be on Tuesday, 14 March (5.00-6.00pm) and will see us tackling the fascinating and challenging world of teenage behaviour management. It would be great to see an even bigger increase in attendance to that than we had at the second session that focussed on revision!

As part of our parent partnership initiative we also said we would try to seek your views more often through quick polls and surveys. To that end, I have a very quick survey for you today to ask about whether you would prefer parents' evening appointments in person rather than online. Staff are split 50:50 on this issue, so I am turning to you to tell me your views. Here is a link to a very quick, 30 second survey that just asks 2 questions – what year is your child in and what is your preference for parents evening:

<https://forms.office.com/e/VrDrhQBk98>

We will then try to accommodate each year group as per the majority view (which may be different in different years! So please do let us know your view. There will also be a comment and free text box to share anything else on your mind

Finally, as we end a very busy and successful term, I am pleased to report that this term we have almost completely cracked uniform with less than 5 students not in full correct uniform every day now and huge strides have been taken reducing in-school truancy during the first 2 weeks we have been focussing on this. Already in-school truancy has more than halved and I think the message is really starting to get through. Students need to be in their lessons or in their support – that's that! Given those successes though, we must see this as a very positive start to 2023. We are now just very keen to welcome back inspectors to check they are happy with our safeguarding, which has been significantly bolstered since last summer.

I think that definitely means it is time for a rest, so I'll stop there and let you enjoy the rest of the newsletter

PS – if you are a regular reader and you know other parents who aren't, please do encourage them to have a look – readers say they do feel well connected to the Academy!

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Year 9 Options

Please accept my apologies for a mistyping on the newsletter last week. Thank you to everyone who spotted it. Of course, we had all agreed the correct date for options evening is Tuesday, 28 February and the parents' evening is a week later on Tuesday, 7 March. The options evening is in person in the academy. Please see the attached letter for more information.

Kevin Ward
Vice Principal

2. Year 7

May we start with a huge thank you to all parents for the help and support you have shown the students and school this half term. Your support with ensuring all students are in correct uniform every day has really helped them arrive to school well-presented and ready to learn. Homework levels have really improved too and we have a huge number of students regularly getting 3 or 4 out of 4 for their homeworks.

Our Top LEARNT achievers this week are:

Ruby P	22
Sav M	20
Cameron S	20
Elizabeth C	20
Freddie M	20
Skye H	20
Betsy K	20
Hanna K	20

I wish all the students a restful and fun half-term break and look forward to welcoming them back in a week for Spring 2!

Mrs Clayton (Head of Year 7)
Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 7)

3. Year 8

A positive start to 2023 for the vast majority of year 8 with the following students achieving the highest achievement points:

Rodrigo F (Head Boy), Kayden S, Kieran S, AJ B, Alfie S, Ryan B, Martina V and Ross B.

We have acknowledged this effort by contacting home via text message to congratulate those students with over 70 achievement points for this term so far.

Please encourage your child to get as many points as possible to enable us to send more reward texts. These also go towards reward trips at the end of the year.

- Shout out for Jenson L for great effort in German and enthusiasm when learning about different cultures.
- 8E are to be congratulated for their effort in lessons across all subjects this term.

Have a great half term

Mr Walters (Head of Year 8)

Mrs Edwards (temporary Assistant Head of Year 8)

4. Year 9

Well done for all your hard work over the course of this half-term. We have seen lots of fantastic effort and engagement, leading to some outstanding work and strong progress. The GCSE options process will really get going when you come back after half-term, so please use some of your free time to go over your options guide and reflect on what will be the best choices for you.

Important notices:

- On the 28 February there will be a Year 9 pathways evening from 5pm-7pm. It is vital that **all** students attend. It will be a hugely beneficial evening for both parents and students as it will provide important information about the GCSE options process and will give you an opportunity to answer any questions you might have. There will be subject teachers available for you to ask questions about the available courses, as well as external guests to answer any questions about life after Open Academy. If you have any questions about the evening then please do contact the year team.
- We would like to give a reminder that mobile phones should be turned off and be put away during the school day. It is a clear policy, and one that is easy to follow. Although the vast majority of students follow this rule, we have had a few cases recently where phones have been used to take pictures of other students in the school. This is not acceptable behaviour, and leads to unnecessary problems within the year group.

Praise for students this week:

- Oskar C for improved neatness and achievements in lessons – Mr Edwards, English;
- 9P for excellent effort in Art with their seascape paintings - Mr Walters, Art;
- For making good progress in football: Lily G, Larisa and Abi M – Mrs Pearsall, PE;
- Maths 9M1: Areen, George, Steven, Amy, Rebecca, Victoria for excellent achievement;
- Neo, David, Hallie, Kayne, Olivia, William for excellent effort in class – Mrs Power, Maths;
- The boys' PE class gave it a good go in their first dance lesson this week learning and performing the HAKA – Mr Lambert, PE;
- Ben N, Layla D, Jacob D, Luke E, Tyler P, Thomas H, Harley R, Keira B, Millie H, Lily-Mae H, Callum WJ, Lucy-Rose B, Katy S, Madalyn P, Grace S, Leah S for consistent effort, focus and engagement this half-term – Mr Crawford, History;
- Well done Kayne for some excellent hot seating questions and to Isabelle for answering questions in role imaginatively. Well done to Daisy H and Rebecca for being supportive and kind members of the class – Mrs Ormosi, Drama

Final reminder:

Please do book the pathways event on Tuesday, 28 February into your diaries, enjoy your half term.

Mr Crawford and Ms Whitwood (Heads of Year)

Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year)

5. Year 10

Learnt points: The current tally for this week is:

- RPH – 21
- NST – 19
- AED – 27
- ABL – 25

Attendance: Current attendance for Year 10 is 91.12%. A small decrease of 0.07% from last week. If not in school please send in evidence (this could be a photograph of the medicine given).

Late to learning: This week 11 Year 10 students have truanted lessons or turned up excessively late to their learning and not been sanctioned on the same day or the day after. Well done to the 99 students who have continued to access all the learning available to them at Open. Also, across the year group there were 410 minutes of lost learning time due to students being late to their lessons.

The final day of half term 3. We are now halfway through the academic year with 3 more half terms to go. Year 10 have stayed dedicated throughout and now with the prospect of work experience ahead. Please keep encouraging your son/daughter to find a place and complete a work experience form to finalise the appointment. The more involved they get the better the experience will be.

There is a new schedule for Hub after half term. Students will receive an updated timetable and this will start happening after half term on Tuesday.

We hope you all have a relaxing and rejuvenating break over the next week and will welcome all back on Monday, 20 February. Thank you for your support from home, it really shows in the students day to day at Open Academy.

Mr Pickup (Head of Year 10)
Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 10)

6. Year 11

Half term is finally here after a busy period after Christmas for our Year 11s. With only a matter of weeks before their GCSEs the pressure is really building up and I thank everyone that has helped support our Year 11s through this time, we really are on the last push now and want them all to get the most out of their remaining weeks of school.

It is the PPE2 exams the day they return on Monday, 20 February, please see attached the timetable. This is the students last chance before the real thing in April/May. Students must remember when their exams are, that they wear full uniform or they will not be allowed into the exam hall and mobiles must not be taken into the hall. We strongly encourage they use the toilet before their exams as leaving the hall will be restricted to those with a toilet pass. Students are expected to stay in the exam for the full allocated time and must not leave at any time; failure to not follow these instructions will lead to them failing those exams.

Students have their revision guides/Teams and know what they should be revising over the half term.

Our top achieving students this week are: Josh H, Isabel B, Kimora A, Summer M, Georgina B, Hayden P and Hayden C.

Last chance for leavers hoodies and link is below. The closing date for ordering is Sunday, 12 February. After that you can still order a hoodie, but it will be at a higher price and delivered separately. The process is that you can log onto the site and choose name, size, colour yourselves and pay directly and then hoodies will all be delivered in a bulk order in May/June. Please click on the link below and any questions please give us a call. A hoodie will cost £21.20 based on a minimum of 71 hoodies ordered. If you require a

nickname on the back then this would be an extra £4.95. Please click on this link to go to your login page: <https://www.schoolleaverscompany.co.uk/leavers-hoodies-login>.

Alternatively go to their website and click on "Login" at the top of their home page. Your login details are as follows: USERNAME: SL61497 PASSWORD: 61497open Prom is booked for Friday, 30 June 2023.

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 11)
Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 11)

7. Music

Hello! My name is Mrs Morgan-Hart and I'm thrilled to be the new music teacher at Open. I am an experienced educator, having previously set up and led school music departments, as well as teaching various subjects on a 1-2-1 basis. A passionate musician, I play the piano and keyboard, although my main love is singing, especially choral music. I turned my working lifestyle upside down to join Open and I'm so glad I did! I am here to make a positive difference in whatever way I can and I am really pleased to have found a school which truly values every person. I'm doing my best to get to know all my students and the staff as quickly as possible, although remembering over 400 names is quite a challenge!

It's great to see many students becoming excited about music in the school. I have been assessing their current capabilities in lessons and discussing with them their musical interests, so I am now in a much better position to be able to design a unique music curriculum which will best serve the students. There is still some catch up work to be done with basic skills and knowledge, but I look forward to sharing the new Music Map with you once it is fully in place.

My aim is to give every student the best possible learning opportunity and experience. With that in mind, we are gradually developing the resources within the department, improving the learning environment and repairing previously damaged instruments. However, even with these revived, we are still going to fall short of what we need. May I make a plea? If you or someone you know might have an unused instrument hiding away somewhere, please would you consider helping us by donating it? Thank you!

We have some visiting instrumental specialists coming into school to deliver individual lessons and several students have expressed an interest in this. If you would like to know more, please do ask your child to speak with me and I will give them a letter to bring home.

Finally, may I wish you all a pleasant half term. If you're at a loose end and would like some peaceful music to relax to, I'll be at Canterbury Cathedral this weekend, directing the choir Poscimur, who travel all over the country filling in for the regular cathedral choirs when they are on holiday. You can watch the services live (Choral Evensong Sat & Sun 5.30pm, Sung Eucharist Sun 11am) or catch up with them later, on the cathedral's YouTube channel. Enjoy!

Mrs Morgan-Hart
Music Teacher

8. Maths

As a maths department we really recognise the importance and benefits of students being able to confidently use a scientific calculator. It is now particularly important with 2 out of 3 GCSE papers allowing the use of a calculator.

With this in mind we would like to strongly encourage all students of all year groups to have their own calculator to use in lessons and when completing homework or revising. This will have a significant impact on their progress and would really allow students to familiarise themselves with the exact functions of their own calculator. This will in turn allow them to complete classwork and homework most effectively and positively impact their overall maths efficiency.

The calculator we recommend is shown below:

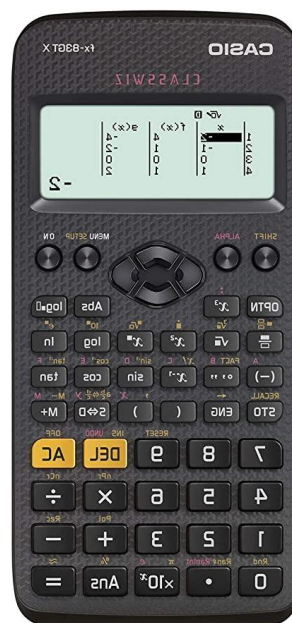
Casio FX-83GTX Scientific Calculator

Most important is that the calculator has the fraction button shown in the image, which is a vital function at GCSE level.

We appreciate this is an expense (around £12) but with the impact it will make on the progress to your children we feel it would be more than worthwhile.

Thanks very much for all of your support.

Mr Bradshaw
Maths Teacher



9. Careers

Calling parents of Year 10 students! Please encourage your young person in their search for a summer work experience placement, week commencing 10 July. Many students have already been successful, but in most cases some flexibility is required if you don't manage to get your first choice of employer. All work experience is valuable and enables students to acquire those transferable skills, which look so good on a CV. Punctuality, dressing-appropriately, behaving appropriately and building resilience and confidence allow students to show employers that they are gaining maturity and self-awareness.

Any questions about Summer WEX or how to contact employers, please contact me, Careers Guidance and Development at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk

If you haven't done so already, please take a look at our 'live' careers newsletter which features our February sector of the month - horticulture! There is lots of information on careers and education pathways for all ages, eves adults! Go to the link via Careers on the Open Academy website or by clicking on <https://padlet.com/carolinedavies3/1ztsr3hkr8syd7ew>

Dr Davies
Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

10. PE



Thank you!
CUSTOM MOVERS!

A big thank you to Custom Movers for sponsoring our brand new netball kits! The students can't wait to wear them at the Norfolk County Championships coming up soon!

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Miss Trail
PE Teacher

11. Attendance

All students should be aiming for 100% attendance. There is a proven link between good levels of attendance and the achievement of target grades. All students must arrive on time and be ready for learning with the correct equipment.

Medical Appointments

Ideally, all medical appointments should be made out of school hours, where possible.

Please help your child to attend school regularly and on time. Absence for illness/medical appointments must be confirmed by telephone, email, letter or in person from an adult, in order for it to be authorised. Please let us know on the first day of absence.

Days off school add up to lost learning			
175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR			
175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments			
0 DAYS ABSENCE (190 school days)	6 DAYS ABSENCE OR MORE	15 DAYS ABSENCE OR MORE	19 DAYS ABSENCE OR MORE
100%	96.9%	92.4%	Below 90%
EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE <i>Best chance of SUCCESS</i>	SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE <i>Harder to make good progress</i>	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT <i>Less chance of success</i>	Persistent Absences CAUSE FOR CONCERN <i>Serious concern Possible Court Action</i>

We always follow up unexplained absence, by telephoning/texting parents on the first day and sending a letter if we are unable to contact you. Good attendance and good achievement are logically linked.

Absent from the Academy

If your son/daughter is ill and is unable to attend school, please contact the Academy on 01603 481640 or contact us via email - student.absence@open-academy.org.uk

Punctuality

All students should be in the Academy no later than 8:30am in order that they are in their tutor group on time. Any student arriving after 8:40am, must will be entered in the late book at reception. If a student arrives after 9:05am, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which affects their attendance. At Open Academy, we monitor all students' punctuality to registration in the morning, as well as to lessons. Detentions may be given to those students who are regularly late.

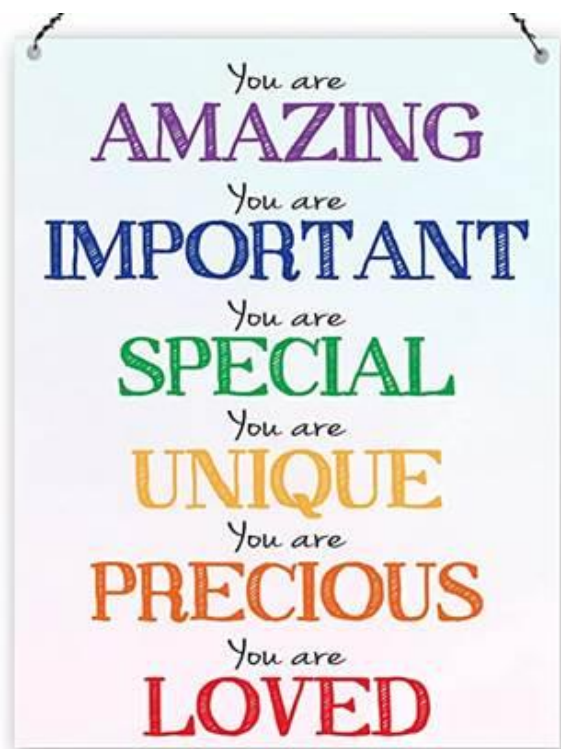
Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's Update

Foodbank

Just a reminder that we take food items in for the Foodbank and your generosity is much appreciated.

Thought for the Week



God bless you

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain