

Open Academy Newsletter 24 February 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I would first like to thank you for your generosity for the earthquake appeal at the end of last term. I can confirm that we raised a total of £300 for the DEC appeal to aid the survivors of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. I am so pleased that as a Christian school we can step up to help those in need – whoever or wherever they are. On that charitable note, Mr Lambert will be raising money for Year 11 prom by running the Blickling half marathon on the 19 March in a fancy dress outfit of Year 11s choosing. If you would like to make a donation, you have the option to make a donation of up to £10 through the parent app or please contact the finance office. There is no minimum payment so any amount however small will be greatly appreciated.

Next, I would like to remind you of our next parent partnership event – this series of evenings exploring topics of interest has started to gain some real momentum since its early small beginnings with me and half a dozen people on a freezing night in January exploring what Ofsted said about us and what we were doing about it. The next event saw a significant jump in attendance with around 30 people attending the how to revise and prepare for assessments session run by Mr Fisher and Miss Wenlock. We are therefore expecting another jump in numbers as the next session will be run by Mr Richardson on 14 March 2023 at 5.00pm and is focussed on managing behaviour – how we go about it in the academy and some ideas for parents to support parents outside school. It promises to be an interesting evening and there will as usual be coffee and biscuits!

I would like to thank you all once more for the excellent effort the community has been putting in to keep students in full correct uniform. We are seeing so few issues now, just dealing with legitimate needs and one-off problems as things should be, so for now we are very happy. The uniform challenge was always a forerunner to our push on in-school truancy and on that too I have to report significant success. We have been running our truancy reflection room for around 3 weeks now and the amount of in-school truancy has dropped dramatically down to almost a quarter of what it was at its peak in November. Those who are struggling to get things right in school are now clear that sloping off or not turning up will lead to a day in truancy the next day and are getting the message. Once again huge thanks to parents and carers for your support on this issue. When we present a united front, the message is delivered so much more clearly.

Whilst we run the truancy reflection room, we are trialling for some students, a different approach to suspensions. I do not suspend students lightly and if their behaviour is serious enough to warrant suspension it is crucial that the students learn from their mistakes. For some students, where appropriate, we are therefore trialling an option for parents to choose if they would like their child to service the suspension in school in the truancy reflection space. This way, we can more easily ensure that they continue with their studies. It won't be offered to everyone as we must be sure that it will be taken as seriously as a suspension served at home. However, we will pilot this approach over the coming few weeks whilst we get to the bottom of truancy and then review whether it is an approach we wish to continue with going forward. I will once again be asking parent views as we did on parents evenings.

Parents evenings survey results. The first thing I would say is thank you, almost 10% of parents expressed a view which is heartening. Amazingly overall, but exactly as I feared, the same as the staff when they were asked the same question, preference is 50:50 online or in person. People made very sensible comments in favour of both methods which probably could be summed up as convenience vs personalisation. I will reflect on the numbers by year group and update you of any proposed changes and our suggested way forward next week.

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Parental Engagement Session – Tuesday, 14 March at 5.00pm

As part of parental engagement sessions, I am pleased to announce our next one is focused on behaviour, what children may go through and how we approach this through the 'Open Way'.

I will be offering advice and answering your questions as we look at ways to best support. This event is on Tuesday, 14 March at 5.00pm. I look forward to seeing you there.

Mr Richardson
Assistant Principal

2. Year 7

We've had a great first week back from the holidays and all the students have got back into the swing of their school routine well. May I take this opportunity to remind parents that if students wish to wear socks over the top of their tights could they ensure that these are black please.

Our top LEARNT achievers this week are:

Jake S	33
Kara M	26
Thomas V	20
Ewan C	18
Ella-Grace S	16
Ben S	16
Hanna K	16
Talula E	16

Our Year 7 netball team are involved in a tournament on Monday, so we wish them all the luck. We would also love to hear about anything that students are achieving outside of school so we can celebrate them too! Please ask your child to let us know of any achievements, such as a new karate belt, music grade etc.

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

3. Year 9

There has been a bit of a change in the Year 9 pastoral team. Mr Crawford has now taken on the role of subject leader of Skills for Life. A big thank you to Mr Crawford for all his hard work with the Year 9 team. Mrs Pearsall has now taken over from him with Miss Whitwood and Mrs Lamb.

Just a reminder that options evening is being held on Tuesday, 28 February 2023 from 5.00-7.00pm. This is an excellent opportunity for parents and students to learn a bit more in depth about subject courses. We would highly recommend that you attend with your child to discuss with staff how courses are assessed and the subject content which will help your child decide the best courses for them.

Shout outs:

From Mr Crawford - Thomas H, Leah S, Tyler P for consistent positive engagement in form this week; Dorian G for buddying with a new student and setting an excellent example. Thomas H, Keira B, Jacob D, Layla D, Luke E, Millie H, Max L, Jacob M, Ben N, Madalyn P, Grace S, Leah S, Callum W for their hard work and engagement in our new topic learning about the Holocaust.

From Mr Coyne:

I have engaged and listened proactively when considering their options for next year. I'm impressed by the growing maturity of the group and responsibility that they are taking for their own pathways.

From Mrs McEvoy:

Lilly N and Chelsea B are working really hard in German.

From Mrs Ormosi:

Amazing first drama lesson for Ivan, well done for reading in front of the class and also to Warren and Areen for being so supportive and being able to respond to feedback given. Also, to Amelia and Lily B for good use of their rehearsal time and to Katy for reading with great expression in front of the class.

Achievement points:

This week year 9 have earned a total of 332 point, with 9NWA gaining the greatest number of points, 116. Our top students gaining points are Tyler P, Thomas H, Leah S, Luke E, Max L, Layla D and Callum W. Well done!!

Mrs Pearsall and Ms Whitwood (Heads of Year)

Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year)

4. Design & Technology

Year 8 are beginning their next DT project which is to make a retro-style gumball dispenser. Each child will need a medium sized jar to put on the top of their product. It needs to have a screw lid that can be removed. Something like a pesto jar or pasta sauce jar would be perfect.

Year 9 are making recycled wooden pallet planters for their current project. If anyone has any pallets at home or knows of someone who does please let me know by emailing me on katherine.rednall@open-academy.org.uk. They can be delivered into school and I will arrange storage.

Mrs Rednall
DT Teacher

5. Year 10

Learnt points: The current tally for this week is:

- RPH – 37
- NST – 35
- AED – 35
- ABL – 38

Attendance: Current attendance for Y10 is 90.98%. A small decrease of 0.14% from the last school week. If not in school please send in evidence (this could be a photograph of the medicine given).

Late to learning: This week only four 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 103 students who have continued to access all the learning available to them at Open. Also, across the year group there were 496 minutes of lost learning time due to students being late to their lessons.

We are now halfway through the school year with three more half terms to go before the long summer break. Year 10 parents' evening was a great success for the first in person meeting for a number of years. Attendance was above 75% which was great. If you wish to know about your child academically, please get in contact with the year team or your child's teachers.

Our focus now switches to work experience which is fast approaching. For places to be confirmed students need to get the form from their pack filled in by the employer and then return this to school. If you have any questions about the process please get in contact with the year team. 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

Welcome back and hope you all had a restful half term. PPE2 exams have taken place this week and continue for the next two weeks. Reports to parents will be released approximately 13 March. This has gone smoothly as students are well prepared and know what to expect. This will hopefully ease any nerves when it comes to the real thing.

We continue to fundraise for prom on 30 June and details will follow once confirmed.

Our top achievers this week are Torri A, Klaudia B, Lucy B, Josh T, Colm S, Rose W, Kimora A, Bryn N, Finley D, Owen M, Alfie K and Grace M. Well done to you all.

Mr Mundy's tutor group received a reward breakfast this week for best attendance. Well done to all of you.

Congratulations to Lucy B who has achieved Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Congratulations to Rose W, Kimora A and Finley D too for achieving Bronze Awards too. Amazing achievements all round, well done to you all.

Thank you for all your efforts with uniform this is now spot on, attendance at hubs is good. Homework could do with a bit of a push as does lateness to school. Homework is the teachers' way of assessing whether students understand the knowledge. If they do not see it then they cannot support your child. Could we ask that you encourage your child to hand in their homework and get into school on time. Tutor time is valuable time for targeted maths, science and English sessions as well as careers and important messages.

Leavers' hoodies have been ordered and will be delivered to school in due course.

Please get in contact if there is anything you would like to enquire about and/or can do to support your child. Remember we are here to help.

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

7. 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 Dr Caroline Davies, Careers Guidance and Development 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, even adults! Go to the link via Careers on the Open Academy website or by clicking on: <https://padlet.com/carolinedavies3/1ztsr3hkr8syd7ew>

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

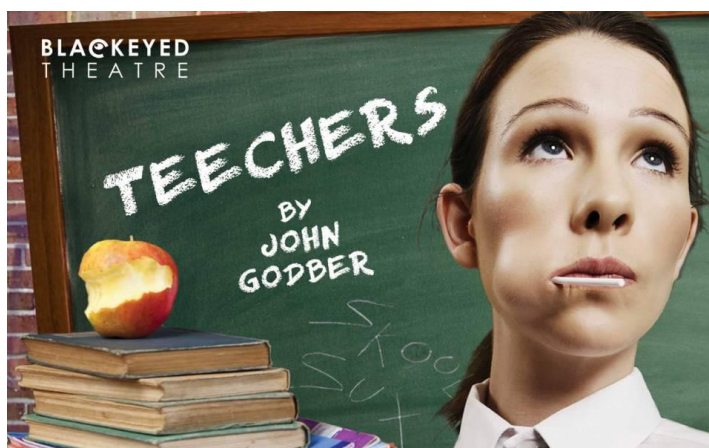
This half term promises to be an exciting few weeks with visits to the Norfolk Skills and Careers Festival at the Norfolk Showground, a student Open Day at Aviva hosted by Group CEO Amanda Blanc, Apprenticeship events at City College Norwich (see the Newsletter for details) and a full day at UEA for Year 12s studying for their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Dr Davies
Assistant Head of Sixth Form and Careers Facilitator

8. Drama

On Tuesday, 21 February, I had the pleasure of taking 29 Year 9 & 10 drama students to see the Blackeyed Theatre's version of *Teechers Leavers 22*. The cast of three did an amazing job of entertaining and engaging our students for nearly two hours and presented a hilarious and high energy take on our current education system.

Our students' behaviour and attitude throughout was exemplary and hopefully they have all come away with plenty of ideas of how the techniques can now be applied to their own drama work. The clear message of how important education, in particular drama, was felt by all and there was lots of discussion on the bus home. My many thanks to the staff who enabled the trip to happen, including those who covered lessons, accompanied the trip or drove the minibuses.



Mrs Ormosi
Drama Teacher

9. Library

World Book Day – Thursday, 2 March

Next Thursday we will be celebrating World Book Day in the academy with an assembly, tutor decorating competition, and by sharing a story across the whole school. Throughout the week students will also be able to get involved in:

Monday: A cosy lunchtime reading session

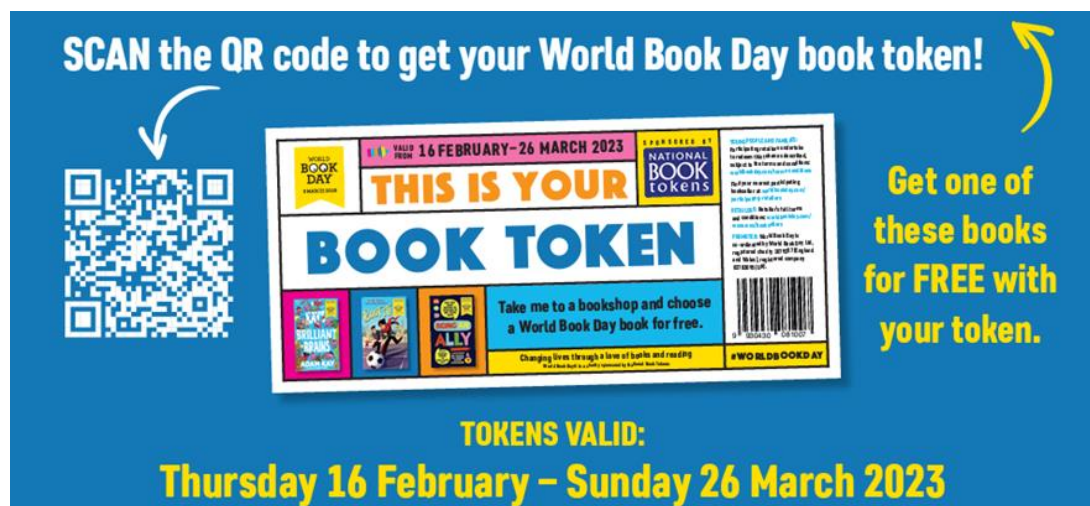
Tuesday: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* themed escape room

Thursday: A book fair where they can collect their free world book day book and make badges to showcase their favourite book or book characters

Friday: The Big Booky Quiz where students will compete in teams to showcase their knowledge of children's books

These activities will take place in the library during student lunchtimes. Students who would like to take part must sign up in advance by visiting the library (students have until break time on the day of the event to sign-up and collect a ticket).

We will have a selection of this year's world book day books available in school for students to collect. Alternatively, they can use the QR code below to receive this year's World Book Day voucher. This can be redeemed in bookshops and supermarkets to receive a FREE world day book or to get £1 off another book of their choice.

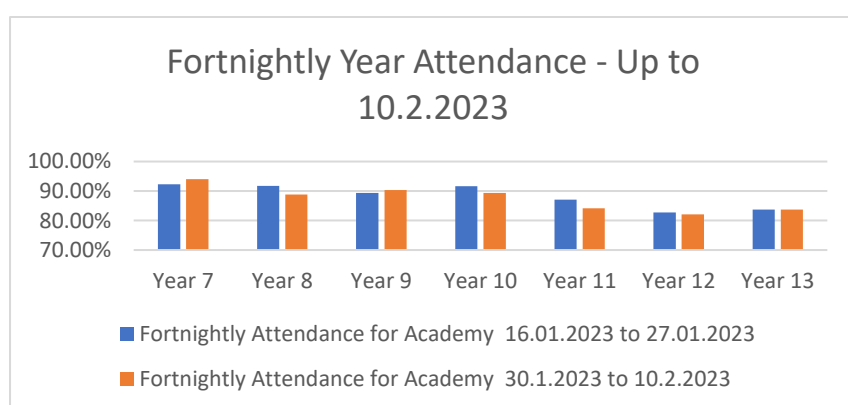


We would also like to take this opportunity to signpost you to our guides on supporting reading at home. Follow this link for more information:

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/assets/Uploads/Supporting-Reading-at-Home2.pdf>

If you would like more personalised support, please feel free to get in touch via library@open-academy.org.uk and I will be happy to help.

10. Attendance



Please see the above mentioned attendance data for the two weeks for period 30 January 2023 to 10 February 2023. Well done to the winning tutor group/s from each year group and SRB, who will be awarded the attendance trophy.

If there are any changes to your email address, home address etc, please do let us know in order that the details can be updated.

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

Don't forget to use the student.absence@open-academy.org.uk email address to inform us of absences (including illness, dental, hospital etc.) of your son/daughter.

No medication (except for inhalers) should be kept in the student's bag. We have a locked cabinet in the main office (G05) where medications are kept. A consent form will need to be completed for the medication, which is available from reception.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

11. Chaplain's Update

Worry can be a big part of our lives. We can spend big chunks of time just worrying about everything. We can worry about tomorrow, loved ones, money, health and we can even worry about what we wear. We can have little worries and big ones too which can become overwhelming and paralysing.

So, what do we do with all of them? Do we allow them to run around in a never-ending circle in our minds or do we let them out?

Letting the worries out of our heads is one of the best things we can do. There is an exit for worry and it's our mouths. It's one of the best ways that worries can exit from the mind. That's it, it's sharing our worries with those that we trust and those who we know love and care for us.

We've all heard the saying "a problem shared is a problem halved". It's so true. Sharing with others is an instant relief from our worries. I want to encourage you to do this, it changes things.

In closing today, I want to leave you with some quotes that encourage us to let the worry out.

"Worry is like a rocking chair; it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere."
Emma Bombeck

"Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow"
Swedish Proverb

And lastly, our heavenly Father says to us:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Let the worries out, let them run around outside of your mind, instead of in it. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless you

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain