

Open Academy Newsletter 9 September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome back to our GOOD Academy!

It is lovely to see everyone back in fine form after the holidays, refreshed and ready for the excitement, challenge and opportunity of the year ahead.

The first thing to mention is phew – what a scorcher! The weather has been fab this week, so good I even sneaked in a mid-week BBQ last night, but that has brought its issues for a smooth start. So - thank you for the brilliant full uniform start – essential for us to check everyone has their full complement of school wear. However, I'm sure you will understand we are effectively allowing summer uniform at least until Tuesday next week when the weather is set to turn cooler.

All that said, uniform is pretty much spot on. We have had to speak to 6 students about leggings as they are not acceptable (we insist that shirts are tucked in) and we had 4 without ties – all of whom should be sorted by today. Plus 4 pairs of trainers where shoes are on order, but not arrived yet or similar. Otherwise 540 out of 556 students are in perfect uniform. Brilliant work all!

As we clarified with staff over the training days, there are only minor changes planned for the year ahead. Our main focus will be delivering again on all the excellent processes that we set up and started to embed last year.

A quick reminder that we now teach in courses i.e. the Year 7 history course or the Year 9 geography course etc and each course has half termly modules, which include a set amount of knowledge (at KS3 captured in the Knowledge Organisers) and skills to be acquired, set assessments to be completed and set homework to practice and develop the skills. From this year we will be expecting all pupils to complete ALL modules of ALL courses. Even where students have to take time out at home through illness, all of the work will be available online too, so there are no places to hide or escape!

On homework, please be aware that we will be expecting your child to complete the average amount of homework completed in England's schools – around 4.5 hours in Key Stage 3 and around 6.5 hours at Key Stage 4 per week. Sixth form double that. We are delighted that over 87% of homeworks set last year when we introduced this expectation, were completed, but this year we would like to get that figure nearer 97% please! Completing homework properly invariably makes school class time easier and allows for faster progress. Those who persistently fail to produce homework over a sustained period – over two weeks - will be required to stay for an extra hub lesson two or three times per week for the next half term until they get back into the habit. We will of course be running homework hubs and support for those who would like a bit extra anyway too.

For Year 11 and 13 it won't be long before we introduce revision hubs across the curriculum which, as ever, we will expect everyone to attend being an important part of the exam prep process. We saw this year the huge increase in demand of the GCSE exams and we will do all we can to ensure our students are able to rise to the challenge again this year.

So, with renewed purpose and vigour, here we go!

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Year 7

Welcome to Year 7's first ever newsletter, it's been a pleasure to see all of them in the academy, it has been a smooth transition into the year due to the fantastic transition week in July. It is great to see their happy and enthusiastic faces around the corridors and lessons, we are thoroughly excited to be starting their next chapter at Open Academy.

The year team will use this newsletter to praise those that have had a great week, exceptional work, top achievers etc, and reminders about upcoming events, as well as uniform or procedure changes in the year group.

Hopefully we are all there with those that have paid and received a locker key. If there are any issues can you contact the finance department in reception.

Hope you all have a great weekend ready for their first full week.

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 7)
Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 7)

2. Year 9

Year 9 have made a great start to this academic year. I have enjoyed getting into lessons to see what they have been doing and I have been impressed with their work ethic and attitude to learning.

Year 9 were shown a road map on day one in form time, which shows their path through the academic year including options choices.

Work will start on their choices after Christmas in term 2, but they have been asked to think about researching careers at home and may need support from you as parents and carers. Things such as; careers they are interested in, qualifications needed and what subjects they would need to take.

Mrs Power (Head of Year 9)
Mrs Middleton (Assistant Head of Year 9)

3. Year 10

We have very much enjoyed welcoming back our new Year 10, they look very professional in their uniform and have made a great start to their new GCSE courses.

This year our tutor programme will very much be focussed on study skills and what students might do after their GCSEs. This is to help support them in feeling motivated and less anxious in their studies.

We understand that most of our students don't know what they want to do after they leave school which, at this stage, is absolutely normal. We are also aware that they (and you) might not be aware of all the options open to them.

The website 'Help You Choose' is a great place to start. Use the link below and click the tab at the top for 'parents', then 'events'. This will then direct you to all the open days/evenings, taking place at various 6th Form providers in Norfolk:

<https://www.helpyouchoose.org/>

We would recommend visiting 6th Forms this year just to have a look and see what courses are out there. Some students may prefer the feel of a 6th Form college, others may feel they are more comfortable in a school 6th Form. In addition, it may give them an idea of the courses available, there are such a variety offered as an alternative to the traditional A-level route.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the pastoral team.

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood (Heads of Year 10)
Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year 10)

4. Year 11

A really positive start to their final year for Year 11. It's been great to see such a positive attitude with students fully engaging with their lessons from the start. I've had many comments from teachers about the early hard work shown so this is really encouraging.

This morning I held an assembly to make it clear how many school days (approximately 150) they have left until their first exam in May. Hopefully this has motivated them to engage fully with the learning available to them. Hopefully all have settled back into school again, but please contact the year team if you have any questions.

All the food technology students worked hard during their first lesson back. They are now starting their coursework and their positivity and effort was fantastic! – Miss Luter

Mr Walters (temporary Head of Year 11)
Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 11)

5. Drama

A reminder that all students in KS3 will need grip socks to do drama. Ones from Gravity are fine, alternatively they can be bought online quite easily.

Mrs Ormosi
Teacher

6. Chaplain's Reflection

As it's a start to a new academic year, I have been reflecting on new beginnings and fresh starts. There is something great about a clean slate, leaving the past in the past, learning from mistakes and reaching forward into the future. The past has a habit of clinging on to us and it will often drag us back with feelings of guilt and failure. I just want to encourage you with these words. The future is in front of you and not behind you.

A book in the Bible called Philippians talks about this.

But one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We can't change the past but we can shape our future.

One of the most powerful things about faith in God is that He is quick to forget the past. He does not dwell on it. He brings healing and comfort for it, but he is equally as quick to encourage us that we have a wonderful future ahead of us.

In closing, don't look behind and dwell on the past. You are in the driving seat and the journey starts here and now, your destination is wonderful, full of peace, victory and success.

You are all in my thoughts and prayers. God bless you.

Mark