

Open Academy Newsletter 17 November 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Welcome to this week's newsletter.

I first need to make a quick apology to Annalee who co-produced with Ada the lovely remembrance poppy art work, that was laid as we marked armistice last Friday. I had not realised both students had worked on it.

I would like to reflect today on one of our most enjoyable events on the calendar – our alumni event – prizegiving, for the Year 11 and 13 students. This year's event was held on Thursday and many of the traditions and processes that we have been introducing over the years are now becoming embedded.

Due to an admin error made during the evening, the award for RS attainment should have been acknowledged to Katie-Louise E. Congratulations Katie for your efforts.

For those not fortunate to be able to make it, the atrium is dressed with table cloths and flowers – there are drinks, nibbles and chocolates available and the warm welcoming atmosphere is complemented by the guests, many of who attend in their finest suited and booted wear. It was great to see that lots of parents joined in with that this year which gave the backdrop to the evening the atmosphere of a special event.

This year we were privileged to have as our guest speaker, a local business entrepreneur and now lecturer in the fashion business at Norwich University of The Arts – Emma Thompson from Little Hot Dog Watson. As has become tradition she delivered an inspiring speech and was then interviewed by Mrs Molloy who went on to take questions from the audience.

Once the speeches were over, certificates were presented by our chair of Governors Mr Nick Plater and by the guest speaker. Winners of the Academy awards had their nominations read before collecting their trophies.

Afterwards a chance to linger and catch up with friends who have come back together for the event, pose for pictures with friends/trophies/speaker and then the goodbyes. A lovely event, which I hope all our students look forward to as much, if not more than prom.

The event goes so well usually because it has been organised by our Head of Achievement and Reward, Miss Whitwood, who leaves nothing to chance! However, she has been ill this week and was unable to attend, which I know she was most upset about. Her friend and colleague Mrs Molloy was able to calm all our nerves and was able to use all that careful planning to deliver the event exactly as intended – a tribute to both Miss Whitwood and Mrs Molloy!

Thank you to everyone who made this such an enjoyable evening – the support and admin staff who worked so diligently in the background to ensure certificates were present and ready, those who prepped the atrium, those who sorted the flowers our guest speaker the staff and parents who cheered on the students – a lovely tradition is now established. Thank you!

We are already looking forward to the next awards evening which will take place next year for KS3 students. If any parents have any connections to anyone they feel would be an inspirational speaker to students, please do let Miss Whitwood know via email Bethany.whitwood@open-academy.org.uk

Finally, can I thank all the parents who donated their small change at the end of the presentation evening for our 'Movember Appeal'. Every November a number of staff grow a moustache to raise awareness and funds for men's health charities. I got involved as I am keen to support men's mental health charities, as I make no secret of the fact that I have at times struggled with both anxiety and depression, but the campaign also supports charities raising awareness of a range of men's health issues including testicular and prostate cancers.

The generosity of those attending the alumni evening is most appreciated. We added £46 just from the collection of small change - and every little helps. If you want to add a donation please go to the Movember website and search for the group 'Open Mo' where you can donate to anyone in the team - the link is here if you are interested! <https://uk.movember.com/donate/find-results/>

Jon Ford - Principal

1. Safety Awareness

This week Years 7 to 10 had special assembly lessons delivered by Norfolk Police on a range of topics. They have asked if pupils can complete a quick survey to give feedback on the sessions. The feedback questionnaire links and message for parents to share at home are below. These sessions supplement the work that tutors are doing on top of our normal skills for life curriculum at school. Students in tutor groups will consider vaping, alcohol and drugs at appropriate levels during this term in addition to the usual curriculum.

For Year 7 students who received the "Online Safety Awareness" presentation which Norfolk Police delivered at school recently. We'd really appreciate some student feedback.

<https://forms.office.com/e/xEcCW5aCuy>

For Year 8 students who received the "Drugs and the Law" presentation which Norfolk Police delivered at school recently. We'd really appreciate some student feedback. <https://forms.office.com/e/bjER6xGW4G>

For Year 9 students who received the "Understanding violence and the consequences of violent offending" presentation which Norfolk Police delivered at school recently. We'd really appreciate some student feedback. <https://forms.office.com/e/KSx6fbv2cW>

For Year 10 students who received the "Abuse in Relationships" presentation which Norfolk Police delivered at school recently. We'd really appreciate some student feedback. <https://forms.office.com/e/h7HaRDw5aj>

Mr Ward - Vice Principal

2. Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Bronze and Silver students should meet in the Lecture Theatre at 3pm on Monday, 20 November. At the moment we are working on ensuring all sections are logged. Staff will be on hand to support students logging into their account, adding relevant information and helping choose activities.

Laptops will be available, although students can use their phones if they have downloaded the DofE app which is free and secure. I would recommend this app especially when it comes to adding photos and evidence of their activities.

Mrs Pearsall - Teacher

3. PE

A massive well done to our lovely Year 7 netball team who had their first league match against Notre Dame High School on Tuesday. All girls were fantastic and showed great teamwork. The game was super close throughout, but Notre Dame just took the win last minute to end 3-2. The girls should be so proud of themselves as they were complimented not only on their great play but politeness and friendliness to staff and students. Well done girls!

Player of the match: Bianca.

A big thank you and well done to our Year 9 girls who were coaches throughout this Year 7 match. It's fantastic to see Open Academy students supporting each other. This is to support the girls in their Duke of Edinburgh program. Thank you girls for being such good role models to our Year 7s.



Another positive netball post but this time about our Year 8 netball team. The Year 8s were faced with Notre Dame's strong A team in their first league match of the year. The girls played exceptionally well and showed fantastic resilience throughout the match. Not once did the girls stop smiling. Year 8, the PE department are so proud of how far you have come in netball – your teamwork skills and motivation are something we all admire. Keep up the hard work and keep being fantastic role models to our Year 7s.

Player of the match: Tallulah

Girls' Fixtures next week:

Monday: Year 7 (two netball teams – 18 students) against Framingham Earl at Open Academy – 5.00pm finish.

Tuesday: Year 9 Netball Smash up at Open Academy – 5.00pm finish.

Wednesday: Year 7 Netball League Match against Thorpe at Thorpe High School – 16.30pm finish.

All matches at Open Academy parents are more than welcome to come and support the students.

Year 8 Boys' Gymnastics:

Year 8 boys are starting their gymnastics unit next week, they will be required to take their shoes and socks off, they can wear grip socks for example gravity/high altitude socks (not slipper socks). The PE department will follow the PE uniform policy if they fail to follow these instructions.

PE Lessons:

All students will be moving onto new sports in the curriculum next week so please make sure students bring extra layers if outside. These must follow our kit policy which is black or navy only.

Students must not be wearing jewellery in PE lessons; girls must have their hair tied back and there is no chewing gum allowed.

Mr Richardson, Mr Lambert, Mrs Pearsall, Miss Whitwood and Miss Trail - Teachers

4. Year 7

A busy week this week, on Tuesday Year 7 had an extra assembly delivered to them by the police on the importance of social media, the use around technology and bullying. They talked about some very important points and it was a great opportunity for Year 7 to understand the laws around these issues. The advice for these issues is to ignore, do not respond and talk to a trusted member of staff or parents asap.

The boys' football team has a home fixture on Monday, 20 November against Acle. Please make sure they bring their own shorts, socks, shin pads and football boots. The match will finish at 5.00pm.

The girls' netball team have a fixture on Monday after school against Framlingham Earl. Good luck to the girls.

A lot of students have borrowed uniform from us and we need to start getting it back in please. Can we remind students that they must be in full uniform and that students persistently forget their uniform will now be issued with detentions. If there are valid reasons please call in or write a note for their tutor.

Another reminder is about not bringing energy/sports drinks into the Academy, this includes hot drinks in the mornings. Energy/sports drinks are not the ideal drink to consume while at school and can have an adverse effect on behaviour and concentration etc. The same goes for hot drinks, as well as being a health and safety concern in the Academy.

Congratulations to Inspiration ABL for having the best attendance and Respect LMH for winning the tutor challenge.

Top achievers this week are, Charlie SW, Matthew O, Bianca M, Dante D, Ashanti G, Lacey-Mae M, Charlie SI, Finley L, Phoebe B and Gracie C.

Teacher praise:

Alfie H and Elise S for effort in maths, always exploring different methods to find a solution – Mrs Marsham

Dante D and Harvey B for Teamwork in maths – Mrs Marsham

Mr Lambert - Head of Year 7

Mrs Roe - Assistant Head of Year 7

5. Year 8

Another great week for the Year 8s. As we hit the middle of the half-term students are well in their stride and we're so proud of how they are doing.

Shout out from Ms Power:

Jasmin C, Jensyn P, Cody H, Arda K, Jessica T, Munashe Z, Jamie E, and Kelsie, great score in their progress task for straight line graphs.

Alice C, Elizabeth C, Matilde B, Bella H, David D - Good effort throughout this unit.

Top LEARNT achievers this week are:

Chakib L	37
Zinedine O	34
Festus A	33
Jensen O	29
Jake C	29

Keep up the good work!

Mrs Clayton - Head of Year 8

Mr Hawkins - Assistant Head of Year 8

6. Year 9

We have started student of the week nominated by form tutors.

Students of the week so far are:

6 November - AJ B, Riley B

13 November - Eliza S, Ada A

Well done to them for being excellent Open students.

Fantastic art work recently from Somaya, Ada, Annalee, Kate S, Martha, Millie S, Bruna, Natacha, Reece Y, Martina, Trixie, Lois and Happiness.

Samuel O and Kenzie P have both made a fantastic start in maths. Well done to them.

Top achievers this week are:

Ria W, Kaitlin W, Oliver N, Tiffany S, Rodrigo, Max S, Luke S, Martina V, Evie D, AJ B.

A reminder that leggings or tracksuit bottoms are not school uniform. Skirts or trousers should be worn. Any students not in correct uniform next week will receive a warning, then a detention. All students must also be wearing their blazers.

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/parent/uniform/>

Please contact the year team if there is a genuine reason a student is not in uniform.

Mrs Power – Head of Year 9

Mrs Edwards – Assistant Head of Year 9

7. Year 10

This week our assembly was delivered by Mrs Pickering our examinations officer. She explained the procedures and rules that we are obliged to follow as dictated by the exam regulators, but also the logistics about how the seating is organised etc.

Having spoken to a number of students I realise that this has raised awareness that the PPEs are not far off. For some this will help focus them in their studies, for some it has made them anxious.

The key to reducing stress is to feel well prepared, organised and for the goal to be for them to do their best.

I realise that it feels early to be sitting PPEs, but it does help students to get used to the process and come the exams at the end of Year 11 they will be familiar with the process and feel of the exams and this will be one less thing to worry about at the time. Also, it helps because regardless of the results they have plenty of time to improve. The exam results will show where their strengths and weaknesses are which teachers will support them with.

We have been looking at making revision cards, mind maps and blurting technique in tutors time. We will continue to practice revision techniques in tutor time throughout the year as well as literacy skills, as it is important to be able to read and understand what the question is asking for.

If you have any concerns please contact the year team and we will be happy to help.

Well done to the following students gaining the most achievement points this week:

Oskar C, Joel M, Bubacarr T, Lily-Anna N, Riley and Queenie-Rose

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood - Heads of Year 10

Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 10

8. Year 11

Another week down in the countdown to...Christmas and exams. Another great week for the year group with many learnt points being awarded and positive choices being made. Many are now also starting to think about what happens next with 6th forms and colleges opening for applications. This is also true of Open and if your son/daughter wishes to apply, they need to complete their application form and hand it back to Dr Davis. If this has been lost, they can always get a new application form from Dr Davis, Mrs Smith or Mr Pickup.

Learnt Points: For just the first week back (4 days when writing) the total amount of learnt points achieved so far is an amazing 213.

The following students have had a great week and achieved the most LEARNED points:

Reece A, Mayling T, Billy B, Sienna B, Lucy NW, Rosie C, Emily-Jayne C, Chloe D, Suzy L, Jessica P, Preston B, Scarlet B, Athanasios C, Megan C, Lucy E, Ara R, Thomas W and Blake B.

Fantastic effort from these students. Keep it up.

Positive praise:

Dylan A for officiating all basketball games in his PE lessons this week.

Top set Science have been amazing with everyone striving for level 6 and above since September.

Consistent effort in Art from Emily JC, Lucy W, Lacey F, Lily T, Kai M, Sienna B.

Keira B for a fantastic attitude to learning.

It is getting colder and darker, but the lights are still bright in Open. The more time your son/daughter is at school the better chance they will have with their approaching exams. If there is ever anything else that you feel your son/daughter needs to support them in their learning, please get in touch with the year team. We will do everything we can to support our year group through what can be a stressful time. Finally, a thank you from us to you, for your continued support and determination to get your child into school.

Mr Pickup and Mr Walters - Head of Year 11

Mrs Smith - Assistant Head of Year 11

9. Careers

We will be holding a 'Parent Information Evening' for Year 10 Work Experience (WEX) on Wednesday 22, November (6.00-7.00pm). This is open to both parents/carers and Year 10 students. During the evening we will explain how the Year 10 WEX week (8-12 July 2024) runs and how students can best prepare for it. There will be a short presentation by me explaining how we support students in their search for a placement followed by an opportunity to ask questions, talk to the Year 10 team and also Mr Kevin Ward, Vice Principal. Supporting paperwork was sent out on Wednesday this week to all families with more details and guidance.

This week we welcomed a new visiting Careers Adviser, Tracey Scarsbrook, who is working with Year 11 and Year 13 on their next steps. Tracey is a fully qualified Level 6 Adviser with many years' experience of working in secondary schools.

Dr Davies - Careers Coordinator

10. Chaplain's Update

Christmas Hampers 'Random Acts of Kindness'

This year we are giving out Christmas hampers as random acts of kindness to our community again. Students are aware of this in school, but we would appreciate your support in this too. Below is an item list of goods that can be donated for the hampers so please feel free to send items into the academy with your child. Please note, it is very important that we stick to the hamper list. Perishable food vouchers can be given as well as donations. The last day for donations will be Tuesday, 12 December. Thank you so much in advance for your generosity.

Christmas Hampers, what to bring

- Perishable Food Vouchers
- Stuffing
- Shloer/Red or White
- Custard
- Savoury Snacks
- Tin Of Chocolates
- Biscuit/Shortbread Tin/
Packets
- Christmas Crackers
- Christmas Cake
- Christmas Pudding
- Mince Pies
- Cranberry Sauce
- Gravy Granules
- Crisps
- Tinned fruit/Peas/Potatoes



A Celebration of Christmas

You are warmly invited to a Celebration of Christmas. This will be a great night of festive cheer for the whole of our community. There will of course be carols, student performances, snacks and a wonderful Christmassy atmosphere. We would love you all to come and invite friends and family too.

The date is Wednesday, 6 December at 6.30pm and it's a free event. We look forward to seeing you there.



Reflection

I saw this poem and wanted to share it with you because it's a challenge to all of us:

*I will walk slowly through this day.
I leave what is not needed behind from yesterday.
I will treasure all the knowledge to move forward.
What I do today will not change or erase the past.
I move on knowing that today I will do differently than before.
If I fail, there will be another tomorrow and a future tomorrow for hope.*

The challenge to us is this. What are we bringing into today from yesterday and how much space are we taking up tomorrow with the circumstances of today. When we reflect on this statement, all manner of things come to mind. Worry, concerns, unforgiveness, anger, hurt and countless other emotions and cares. All of the aforementioned have a habit of cluttering up our tomorrows if we let them. When we dwell too much on what is behind us, the hope and happiness of today and tomorrow diminishes.

Let's be determined to leave the past in the past.

The Bible talks about this kind of subject in the book of Philippians and says this:

But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Be encouraged to reach forward for what lies ahead and work hard to forget about what has been before. God bless you all.

Mark Pimlott - Chaplain