

Open Academy Newsletter – 28 February 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I am delighted to write to you this week as the 'real' Miss Wenlock!

If you are not sure what I mean, then I would encourage you to read the parent newsletter from Friday, 14 February which was written on behalf of myself using the power of AI. I was fascinated to see how well this innovative tool could help me to connect conveniently with parents and carers at the end of a very busy week and half term. I was impressed with how well it could relay messages about success and reminders about uniform and do so, to some extent, with warmth and clarity. I am still wrestling with how comfortable I feel about AI doing this work for me; yes, I was able to still communicate my key thoughts and yes, it did save some time, but whether this was the right thing to do is something I, and the Academy, are reflecting on.

Already, we know that AI is doing remarkable things across all aspects of life and in schools, it can be hugely beneficial in helping to make engaging and accessible resources, check student work and support a range of communication, but we are asking ourselves; are we okay with this? What are the benefits? What does this mean for the role of adults in classrooms and across the wider school? How are we helping students to become critical thinkers and challenge the source of information given to them? In response to the huge opportunities, but also, controversies around AI, we are working with UEA and other schools locally to inform our approach and we have set up a staff 'steering group' to develop our policy. We would like to open this invite to parents/carers; it would be great to have your voice on how we engage with AI as a school and work together to make sure this is productive and purposeful. If you are interested in supporting this work, please email office@open-academy.org.uk

I hope that you had a lovely half term break, we have had a very positive and busy return to the new half term. Our student leaders have continued to go from strength to strength, hosting their meeting at City Hall on Tuesday and welcoming leaders from over 40 trust schools at the Academy today for a trust conference, as well as meeting with our Labour MP, Alice Macdonald to discuss Academy life.

I would like to say a big thank you to parents and carers for sending your child into the Academy on time to make the most of the day; more time in school and in lessons directly impacts progress for the better for each child. On that note I would like to finish by wishing our Year 11 and Year 13 students the best of luck for their final set of mocks (PPE2s) starting next week; a great opportunity for that final rehearsal before the 'real thing'.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

Kate Wenlock
Vice Principal

1. Upcoming Assessments

Year 11: Mock Series 2 All Subjects Week Beginning 3 March 2025

English: Romeo & Julliet, A Christmas Carol + language paper 2 (non-fiction)

Maths: All content (2 papers - calculator and non-calculator)

Science: Paper 2 in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (See Teams Classnote for content breakdown)

Geography: Coasts, development, managing resources, urban fieldwork, coastal fieldwork, UK challenges

History: All 4 topics

Languages: All content

Food: All content

DT: All content

Textiles: Practical skills assessment

Sport: All of component 3

RS: 2 paper - Christianity and Islam

Computer Science: Paper 2 content (programming)

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

Keep revising! Use revision guides and online resources including past paper questions. Ideally 30 minutes per night. Make sure you cover all subjects each week. Use resources on Teams Classnote to support your revision.

Ask your subject teachers for support where it is needed.

Good luck!

Mr Murray (Teacher)

2. Revision Topics

Computer Science

Reminder for PPE2 will be doing Paper 2 J277/02 Topics: Computational Thinking. This involves topics such as: Boolean operators, truth tables, trace tables, pseudocode, SQL, flowcharts (with symbols), algorithms and sorts.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 24th Feb – 2nd Mar 2025 | System software: 🔧 OS, utility software | Searching and sorting algorithms: bubble, merge, binary | Visualize sorting algorithms with 🔧 flowcharts; summarize operating system features. |
| 3rd Mar – 9th Mar 2025 | Ethical, legal, and environmental issues 🔔 | Subprograms and data structures: arrays, procedures | Create a 🧠 table of pros/cons for ethical issues; practice coding subprograms and arrays. |

Combined Science

We will be focusing on the Paper 2 content (majority of Year 11 and your previous Year 10 Summer topics). Please see our revision topics below:

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ❤️ Inheritance, variation, and evolution | 🌐 Rate of reaction: factors affecting reaction rates | 🔥 Particle model: density, internal energy | 📄 Practice explaining inheritance diagrams; solve density-related <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> problems. |
| 🌿 Ecology: food chains, carbon cycle | 🔧 Chemical analysis: tests for ions, chromatography | 🌌 Space physics (triple only) or additional review | 👉 Create flashcards for key ecology concepts; review practical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> methods for chromatography. |

Mr Willgress (Teacher)

3. Year 7

Another fantastic week for the year group. We are still the best in the academy in so many ways; learnt points, uniform, behaviour, attitude. Our attendance is still above national average which is fantastic. We are now working our way into lighter days and warmer times.

The Big C of Resilience:

Each tutor group has been challenged with planning and delivering an assembly to the rest of the year group. These are on different themes linked to the school's values. The second assembly was delivered by Respect on the subject of teamwork. So far both assemblies delivered by the tutor groups have been

fantastic. You can really see those who will be wonderful public speakers in the future. It is no easy thing to stand in front of around 100 of your peers and give a speech. Now we are just waiting for the next two groups to deliver their assemblies.

Positive Praise:

I ask members of staff to share some positivity they have witnessed from the Year group, below is what they have said.

- Year 7 student leaders on the City Hall trip were brilliant! A real credit to the year group - especially Natasha who gave a whole speech to the Mayor and Sherriff of Norwich - and Ann and Ava who helped write it.
- Nabeel H and Jayden M for excellent effort in maths using good methods to work out mathematical problems.
- Roman S did very well in numbers up to 100 in Spanish.
- Ebony & Freya for some excellent feedback in Student Voice this week.

Reminders:

- If your son/daughter is not in full correct uniform (blazer, shirt, tie, trousers, skirt, shorts and black shoes) they will be given a 30-minute detention to complete at the end of the day. If there is a genuine reason for any problems with this in the morning. please send a note in with your child to hand in to the year office.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school. If a student is caught chewing gum they will receive a detention.
- Every Wednesday from 3.00pm we have a homework club in a computer room to help those complete any outstanding homework.
- Some students are starting to be excessively late to a lesson or not arrive at all. If this is the case the student will receive a truancy code on Arbor. If a student receives two truanancies in one day they will be in IE the following day.

It is only with your help that each student will make the most of their time at Open. Thank you for your continued support of the learning of your son/daughter, it shows itself every day.

Mr Pickup (Head of Year 7)

Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 7)

4. Year 8

It is great to see everyone back after half term, nice to hear what they have been up to and also lovely to see the lighter mornings/evenings and better weather, although my Year 8 PE class might not agree after being outside period 5 on Wednesday.

School uniform is looking good in Year 8, I am now focussing on the correct PE kit, it seems many, especially boys do not have their Open Academy black polo shirt, this is compulsory for them to wear so please talk to your child and please order a new one.

Tutor groups have now been reminded about the tutor decorate the door competition for Easter. If you have any old decorations that are no longer needed, please give to your child to use in school please. Congratulations to Challenge for the best attendance and Inspiration for winning the weekly tutor quiz.

Teacher praise:

- Amazing effort from so many in my PE lesson on Wednesday afternoon in our fitness lesson, so many showed great perseverance despite the terrible weather conditions – Mr Lambert
- Year 8 reps on the City Hall trip were BRILLIANT!!! Especially Neveah and Theo who performed a speech to the Lord Mayor and Sheriff.
- Shout out for Isaac H for DT.

- This week Year 8 have been learning to use the pillar drill in DT. Isaac asked me to teach him how to change the drill bit on the pillar drill so that he could help other students with their drilling. Isaac showed excellent communication and teamwork and I am so proud of him for showing such independent learning and challenging himself.
- Archie for always working so hard in English. Tahlia & Ashanti for some excellent Ask & Answering this week.
- Harrison A for excellent effort in maths and using good methods to work out mathematical problems.

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 8)

Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 8)

5. Year 9

A good return for Year 9 with attendance back up to approximately 92%, so thank you for your support with this.

We are now building up to choosing options in Year 9 so this is a vital time for discussing this with your child. I have asked tutors to have these discussions and support their tutees in form time on Thursdays.

We hope to see you at the Year 9 options evening on Tuesday, 11 March to talk to your child's teachers and get their advice.

We have also been pushing the mobile phone policy in school these last few weeks and we have issued several bans for those who are regularly using their phone in school. Thank you for supporting this. Phones need to be in bags and out of sight when in school. Our approach is that they are an unnecessary distraction to learning. If a student needs to send an urgent message home, they can speak to myself or Mr Hawkins and we can facilitate this.

Just for clarification, we have been making it clear to students that being in correct uniform with the correct equipment is their responsibility and part of being ready for school. We really appreciate your support with this.

Teacher praise:

- Well done Iris for good skills in rugby and Elizabeth for excellent work in football - Mrs Pearsall and Miss Trail
- Alfie L - outstanding effort and enthusiasm in English
- Noah C - consistent hard work and engagement in English – Mrs Clayton
- Alfie L for excellent effort in maths using good methods to work out mathematical problems - Mrs Marsham
- Most of the Year 9 I teach did very well in quite a challenging lesson - Mrs Blackburn
- Year 9 student leaders have been coming up with some great ideas for Comic Relief so watch this space! – Mr Walters
- Year 9 student leaders on the City Hall trip were exceptional on Tuesday - great representatives of the year group. Especially David who gave a speech with Theo in Year 8 to the Lord Mayor and the Sheriff of Norwich - Mr Dilley

Mr Walters (Head of Year 9)

Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 9)

6. Year 10

Students of the week:

Tiffany S, AJ B, Noam M and Ross B.

Students with highest achievement points this week:

Lily A, AJ B, Rusne, Natacha, Alfie H, Samuel H, Zak L, Noam, Oliver N, Leah S, Nikita, Luke S, Brandon, Hannah S, Martina, Martha, Lena, Esme, Riley W and Paige.

A reminder regarding work experience week beginning 7-11 July - all students will need to have a work placement, and places will need to be approved by Dr Davies when students return their green forms. We are supporting some students at the moment regarding finding placements, please let us know if your child needs support in finding a place.

Teacher praise:

Year 10 are about halfway through their next mini make project, designing and making a desk tidy in the style of Alessi. Today we have been focussing on joints and construction, particularly box joints and slot joints. Well done to Martha and Eliza who showed great measuring and problem solving to ensure their constructions were accurate and finished to a high standard. Next steps are to add a painted surface finish to them and add any ergonomic details for function – Ms Rednall



Mrs Power (Head of Year 10)

Mrs Edwards and Mrs Hindry (Assistant Heads of Year 10)

7. Work Experience

We are delighted that almost half of Year 10 students have now secured a work experience placement for 7-11 July 2025. Students have worked really hard to find a placement, showing that perseverance does pay off! It is good to see that a wide variety of workplaces and employers have now emerged from the restrictions of the pandemic and are keen to give young people a chance.

There is still plenty of time for those who are currently looking for their placement – and don't forget that there is lots of help to hand in school, from myself, Year 10 tutors and the Year 10 Pastoral team. Any questions around work experience, please contact me at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk

Dr Davies (Assistant Head of 6th Form and Careers Guidance & Development)

8. Year 11

Thank you, Year 11, for a super first week back after half term! With only **66 days** left until the first exam on the 5 May, it is vital that we keep an open dialogue between student, teacher and home and I encourage you all to come and speak to me or Mrs Lamb if you have any questions, need support/have concerns, or want to celebrate any mini victories you have.

We are seeing some improvement in attendance (up just under 1%), and as a year group you have achieved 13335 reward points this week - real tribute to how the year group has taken on the challenge of this vital year of education - you should be proud of your achievements so far. We are very proud of you. Next week the PPE2 exams begin – a brilliant chance to show how much you know and how much you've improved. It is also an excellent chance to find out where the gaps in your knowledge are and what you need to focus your revision on in the lead up to exams.

Key Stats

Tutor Competition

Well done Mr Stephens form – you win this week's tutor competition for both attendance and reward points received – smashing it this week.

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| R11 ABR | 81.5% |
| D11 ERO | 87.9% |
| I11 KMU | 89.0% |
| C11 NST | 92.2% |

Attendance

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| R11 ABR | 2135 |
| I11 KMU | 2530 |
| D11 ERO | 2775 |
| C11 NST | 3045 |

Being in school and learning is so important for your present and future success – if your attendance drops below 89% you risk doing serious harm to your education and prospects – being in school and in lessons is crucial for your future success. Do you know what your current attendance is? If not, ask and if it is low work with us to help improve it.

Rewards

These are awarded by members of staff for different reasons; active listening, engaging fully with the learning, giving great feedback by answering questions, being respectful to all, being present and ready for learning, working as a team. For the last 5 days the total amount of learnt points achieved is **a brilliant 13335**. This is fantastic and represents how well you are doing and is a great show of positive learning.

Top Ten Performers

These students have banked the most reward points this week – well done all:

Chloe P, Megan P, Chelsea B, Kayne B, Ivan B, Lola B, Lily B, Brian B, David C and Oscar C.

Praise

- Scarlett R for leading the group and Daisy H for working hard in badminton” Mrs Pearsall and Miss Trail
- Chloe, Jahsiah and Asha in hub tonight - they worked really well” Mr. Kent
- “Jessie Thomas - Improved attendance and effort in English
- Lucy Rose Brown - Effort in English
- Theo Powley - Effort in English
- Charlie M for effort in English - Miss Roberts
- Thomas H, Chelsea B, Lucy B for hard work in science – Mr Stephen
- Praise for Kiera B, Brandon P and Ayo T for all their hard work in English - Mrs Clayton
- All of 11ABR are revising well during tutor times, some have brought in paper resources from their subjects to work through - Mr Mundy
- All Student Leaders who took part in the Q and A session with our MP this week – you represented the school well - Mr Dilley
- Larisa, Maizi, Daisy, Kiera, Brandon, Kayla and Ayo for working so hard in lessons in the run up to their mock exams - Mrs Clayton
- A massive shout out for Amy T for completing all higher papers to a high standard in German – Mrs McEvoy
- Maths Year 11 - Shevaun G and Zac D for excellent effort in maths using good methods to work out mathematical problems - Mrs Marsham

Important Notices/Reminder

Lates – all minutes you miss of lessons will be added up and then made up on a Friday. Again, being in class from the start of each and every lesson is so very important for you achieving your full potential in May/June - so expect us to be hard on this.

Truancies – there are too many students missing too many lessons at the most critical time of their learning. With this in mind, the truancy rules are now (over 1 week):

| Truancy 1 Email/Text home | Truancy 2 (IE and call home) | Truancy 3 (Truancy EIE) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | |

Please remember if you are struggling then you **MUST** come to the Year Office or S58! We can help!

- **Uniform** – Being smart and presentable is an important part of being ready to learn. Please make sure you come to school in the correct uniform – please check the website if you need guidance of what is required.
- **Hub Card** – Students have made an awesome start with the Hub Card scheme. Once it is signed by all relevant Hub Teachers in the week, students need to get it signed by parents/guardians and then someone from the year office – it can then be entered into the prize draw.

Student Name –
 Tutor Group –
 Report Start Date –
 Hub Focus –

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| History | | | | | |
| Business | | | | | |
| Geography | | | | | |
| Art | | | | | |
| Photography | | | | | |
| English | | | | | |
| Maths | | | | | |
| Applied Intervention | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | |

HOY/AHOY

Parent Signature

- Prom – For more details about the Prom, please see the letter that was sent out to you this week containing details about time/arrivals/dress code etc. Plus information about the very important PUPIL PASSPORT that details what will be taken into consideration when deciding who will be allowed to Prom – remember it is not a given that students can attend.

If you wish to know about your child academically, please contact the year team or your child’s teachers, and we would be happy to discuss your child’s progress! It is only with your help that each student will make the most of their time at Open. Thank you so much for your support, it really makes a difference, and we are so grateful for it.

Mr Dilley (Head of Year 11)
 Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year 11)

9. 6th Form

For Year 12 – Planning Ahead

UCAS Hub

Start exploring your future with the **UCAS Hub**—a fantastic resource to research courses, universities, and apprenticeships. Create your account now to get ahead.

Work Experience

Consider arranging work experience during upcoming holidays. It strengthens your personal statement and helps you decide on future pathways. Speak with Dr Davies for support.

University Open Days

Many universities offer open days throughout spring and summer. Check out their websites and register early — visiting in person can give you a real feel for student life

Year 13 – UCAS and Next Steps

UCAS Extra (from 26 February 2025)

If you haven’t received any offers or changed your mind about your course, UCAS Extra allows you to apply for additional courses. This is a fantastic opportunity to explore new options—speak to your tutor or Mrs Molloy if you’re unsure how to proceed.

Reply Deadlines for Offers

- If you have received all your decisions by **8 May**, you must reply by **5 June**.
- Make sure to carefully consider your firm and insurance choices—this is a big decision!

Student Finance

Applications for student finance are now open. Apply early to ensure your funding is in place by the time your course begins.

Key Dates to Remember

- **26 February:** UCAS Extra opens (Year 13)
- **March/April:** University open days (Year 12)
- **8 May:** Last date to receive decisions if applied by the January deadline (Year 13)
- **5 June:** Deadline to reply to offers (Year 13)
- **29 April:** UCAS 2026 Course Search opens (Year 12)

Study Tips for Success

- **Create a Revision Schedule:** Break your revision into manageable chunks and stick to a timetable.
- **Use Active Recall:** Test yourself regularly rather than just reading notes.
- **Stay Balanced:** Prioritise rest, exercise and downtime to stay focused and positive.

Mrs Molloy (Head of 6th Form)

Dr Davies (Assistant Head of 6th Form and Careers Guidance & Development)

10. Chaplain's Thought for the Week



You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless. Mark