

7 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Year 11 and 13 Student

Plans for Class of 2021

I am writing to inform you of the plans that we have for the Class of 2021 as they approach the end of their time at Open Academy. I can see from many other schools locally that Year 11 and 13 are being asked to leave in May. We have taken the decision to attempt to get as much evidence as possible to secure the grades for the students at this time. However, we recognise that for a minority of students that is becoming increasingly difficult when their friends at other schools are finishing elsewhere. In this letter I hope to outline the principles that we are adopting in the knowledge that each student has a different journey as they have all different experiences through lockdown and beyond.

It would be good to hand in all library/text books, locker keys at the end of this half term.

The last day of school

The official last day of school for our Year 11 and 13 will be **9 June**. There may be handful of students who might need to come back in after that date to finalise last pieces of evidence. This is because it is the end of the third assessment window we have put in place for our students. All of the evidence will have to be submitted to the exam boards the next week so the 11 June is the last possible date we can have.

I have work experience planned

Some students have prearranged work experience planned that was arranged before the pandemic caused all these problems. Students in that circumstance must keep Thursday work-experience free until all the required assessments are completed. On each Thursday students will come to the football block and complete any assessments that will support their evidence base. We will buy in additional staffing to support that work.

I have completed all of my courses and my teacher needs no more evidence

Should this be the case in every subject then students may discuss with their Head of Year to arrange an earlier finish date in partnership with the parents. There is no point coming into the academy if everything is finished. We anticipate that several of the students will be in that position by the half term break. The Head of Year will recommend the adjustment to the senior leadership team. This will be approved on a case by case basis. An early check will be made to ensure that the evidence is robust enough before signing off on the decision.

Attendance

It is imperative that students attend their lessons well at this time. If there are special circumstances that we need to be aware of please inform the Head of Year by email. This may form part of our evidence base.

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Learning Excellence



End of Year Celebration

Should this idea be welcomed by the students we hope to have an end of school year celebration. In this day the Year 11s can do their shirt signing and have a final celebration (online) assembly. In the afternoon we hope to hold a special outdoor lesson where pupils can say goodbye. We would love to welcome all those pupils who have got to that final week in one piece! If a student has left before that date it will be decided by the COVID risk assessments as well as behaviour and attendance data whether they can come back again for the celebration. Of course, we will be consulting risk assessments and the students to find out what we might do. We hope to make the celebration day to be 9 June.

The Prom details will come out in separate communications by the Heads of Year.

Internship Programme

Year 13 students, and Year 11 students who are coming to Sixth Form next year have been invited to become mentors for our younger students. This has been very positively received by the students. We hope to mitigate some of the damage caused by the pandemic and lockdowns by having student volunteers working with their younger peers. We also want to prepare our Year 13s for the world beyond our walls and the Year 11s for life in Sixth Form. The outline programme is this:

Week beginning 21 June and 28 June

A training programme for all the volunteers. This programme would be very helpful to prepare students for sixth form and/or university. Our three current student mentors have learned lots of new skills during the year. We would like to expand that to more students. The Year 11 mentors would also have their 2-week Sixth Form induction at the same time. Those students will have lessons in their chosen subjects to get a head start on their A-levels. Some of the mentors may begin working in the second week of the training programme.

Weeks beginning 5 July, 12 July, and 19 July

Our volunteers would be working with our younger students in a very exciting programme. They would be expected to do approx. 15 hours work with the students over each week. The experience will be invaluable for the volunteers and the younger students.

Week beginning 26 July

Our volunteers would be working with our new Year 7 intake in an exciting summer school programme.

We have worked with external agencies and have arranged budget and a reward scheme. We would not be allowed to employ the interns in the usual manner as some of them could be under 16. What we can do is reward the interns for every successful week of mentoring that they do. There are between 3 and 5 weeks of mentoring available. The governors have agreed a reward of £75 of Amazon vouchers for each completed week of mentoring – this is ever so slightly above the national minimum wage for the aforementioned 15 hours of weekly support. That would mean that interns could earn rewards of up to £375 if they are available for all of the weeks.

Kind regards



Mr Kevin Ward
Vice Principal