

Open Academy Newsletter – 14 March 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Welcome to this week's newsletter. I have to say I could get used to not writing this every week, as it has been a pleasure to read Miss Wenlock's articles over the last couple of weeks, highlighting the power and the issues surrounding the rapidly growing AI phenomena.

I thought I would take the opportunity in this week's newsletter to reflect a little on the fact that we are now well and truly into the Lent season. Personally, I have gone very traditional this year and chosen to give up chocolate for Lent and I'm hoping that gives me a welcome boost on my Slimming World journey!

However, I am mindful of the poem which I've shared previously which highlights a whole range of things which I will also be trying to do during the 40 days of Lent. I'm pretty sure I've shared it before, but I think it is well worth reminding ourselves that during the Lenten journey towards our Easter celebration, this springtime refreshing ourselves and a commitment to leading a worthwhile and constructive life is helpful for anyone from any faith or none:

What to give up: a Lenten reflection

Give up complaining - focus on gratitude.

Give up pessimism - become an optimist

Give up harsh judgements - think kindly thoughts

Give up worry – trust divine providence

Give up a discouragement - be full of hope

Give up bitterness - turn to forgiveness

Give up hatred - return good for evil

Give up negativism - be positive

Give up anger - be more patient

Give up pettiness - become mature

Give up gloom - enjoy the beauty that is all around you

Give up jealousy - pray for trust

Give up gossiping - control your tongue

Give up sin - turn to virtue

Give up giving up - and hang in there!

This version always catches my eye, but there are many and once more, even if you just pause to reflect on renewal at this time of year, it is a great start to a successful renewal of our hopes.

I am sure Year 11 will have little time for pause and reflection as they complete their final mocks and begin the journey to the actual GCSEs in a matter of weeks. I am sure a pragmatic giving up, or cutting down on social media might be helpful as they use feedback from teachers after these exams, to revise and prepare to achieve the best results they can.

As for all of us, reflection and hard work in spring, sets us up for the year ahead! Have a great week everyone.

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Updates

Year 9 Pathways

Thank you to those who attended the Year 9 Pathways Evening on Tuesday night. It was extremely successful, and we appreciate your support.

Here are the next steps following this event:

- Please remind all students to hand in their options choice slips to their tutors. Completed options forms must be submitted by Friday, 25 April. Be sure to include names and any additional information regarding choices on the back of the forms.
- I understand that some students may be unhappy with the subject blocks. As an academy, we need to maintain a broad curriculum, which means certain subject combinations may not be possible. However, I will review the blocks if the combinations and numbers indicate that a subject is placed incorrectly after the closing date.
- If you were unable to attend the evening, please contact the year team, and they will provide your child with their option booklets.
- For any further questions regarding subjects, please feel free to ask during the Parents' Evening on Tuesday, 25 March. Appointments are available now on the Arbor app.

Year 11 and 13 PPEs

We have reached the end of the Pre-Public Examination (PPE) process. The majority of students have performed well, but I need to address concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour that has breached examination conditions. This behaviour could impact your child's future examinations.

Students have been reminded in multiple assemblies by both myself and the exams officer about the examination conditions and the consequences of malpractice. This information will also be included in the candidate handbook before the summer exams.

We are still seeing incidents of:

- Students messing around and communicating non-verbally while entering the examination room.
- Non-verbal and verbal communication during the exam.
- Lateness beyond the start time of the exam. Students must arrive on time; otherwise, they will not be allowed to enter the exam hall.
- Leaving the exam hall without authorisation, which could lead to immediate disqualification.

Results and Feedback

Over the next two weeks, staff will provide Year 11 and Year 13 students with their results and feedback. A formal report will be sent home via the Arbor app before the Easter holidays. To help support your child with these results and feedback, please refer to the following advice:

Here are some useful feedback and revision strategies for students after their GCSE mock exams:

1. Analysing Your Performance

- Review your mistakes – Understand where you lost marks and why.
- Look for patterns – Are there common errors (e.g., careless mistakes, misunderstanding questions, time management issues)?
- Compare with mark schemes – This helps you understand how to structure answers for full marks.

2. Setting Revision Goals

- Prioritise weak topics – Focus on the subjects and topics where you lost the most marks.

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

- Set SMART targets – Make goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- Use a revision timetable – Plan regular study sessions to cover all subjects evenly.

3. Improving Revision Techniques

- Active recall – Test yourself using flashcards or past paper questions.
- Spaced repetition – Revisit topics at intervals rather than cramming.
- Past papers & timed practice – Improves exam technique and time management.
- Teach someone else – Explaining topics helps reinforce your understanding.
- Mind maps & summaries – Great for visual learners to organize key concepts.
- Use exam board resources – Official websites often provide past papers and examiner insights.

4. Enhancing Exam Techniques

- Read questions carefully – Highlight key command words like "explain," "compare," and "evaluate."
- Show working out (Maths & Science) – Partial credit can be awarded.
- Structure answers properly (English & Humanities) – Use PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explain, Link) for essays.
- Manage time effectively – Practice under timed conditions and allocate time per question.

5. Seeking Help & Support

- Ask teachers for clarification – They can provide guidance on tricky areas.
- Join revision groups – Studying with others can reinforce knowledge.
- Use online resources – Websites like BBC Bitesize, Seneca Learning, and Physics & Maths Tutor.

6. Staying Motivated & Healthy

- Take breaks – Use the Pomodoro technique (25-minute study, 5-minute break).
- Stay active & eat well – Helps concentration and energy levels.
- Get enough sleep – Avoid last-minute all-nighters before exams.
- Stay positive – Learn from your mistakes rather than being discouraged.

Mr Fisher (Assistant Principal)

2. Year 7 Camp

It is great to see more students now signing up for camp. All those who have not signed up were sent a letter last week about the benefits of attending camp. If you did not receive this letter please do let me know. There will be a parents information evening next half term. Information regarding this will be sent out soon and will be on the website.

As mentioned in the letter, we truly believe this trip will be an enriching experience for all Year 7 students and we would love for all of Year 7 to be part of it. Any Year 7 who does not attend the trip will be following a timetable in school. This will not be their usual timetable, but will involve completing work across a variety of subjects. Students will be required to be in full school uniform for the week.

Please remember that Thomas Anguish is a charitable organisation that can support with paying for this trip, so please do get in touch with them if you need any financial support. Contact them on 01603-621023 or e-mail: info@norwichct.org.uk as soon as possible. Do not delay. Late applications may not be processed in time.

As a school we also have access to some camping equipment, so can supply to those who may need to borrow equipment. This can be discussed at the parent information meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss further or have any more questions.

bethany.halliday@open-academy.org.uk

Mrs Halliday (Teacher)

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

3. Year 7

Halfway through the half term and apart from a small minority all are behaving fantastically, displaying so much determination, resilience and enthusiasm. Each and every morning it is a joy to witness our group of students coming together in the atrium.

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. Last week the assembly was delivered by 7E. It was a great effort with lots of students taking part and talking in front of the rest of the year group. The next and final assembly will be delivered by 7H, so you will have to wait until next week to hear the results of it.

Positive Praise

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

- Praise for Mustafa and Julian for some excellent reading of Shakespeare in class.
- Tobias J and Tallulah BH for effort in science.
- Mason C for effort and achievement in his English homework
- Honey-Mae B for always being willing to help her peers with the class work.
- Jensen C for always pushing himself to learn a lot outside of class.
- Irmantas S for always contributing thoughtful ideas to the class discussions.
- Mia Marie C, tried very hard in Spanish and she deserves to be mentioned. Leon W, Noah and Ethan always try their best in every lesson. Special mentions too for Orlagh, Lexi, Drew, Irmantas, Ollie, Oliver, Taras, Poppy, Summer, Nma, Barbara, Honey, Mohamed, Mustafa, Emily, Courtney Shortt, Jenson, Nemo, Troy, Ann D and Lila.
- Nabeel AH for listening and applying the correct methods to use in maths to solve questions.
- A big well done to Harvey, Archie and Paul for consistently displaying excellent subject knowledge in English - Mrs Napthen.
- Some fantastic art being created – Mr Walters

Reminders

- If your son/daughter is not in full correct uniform (blazer, shirt, tie, trousers, skirt, shorts, 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/lollypops are not allowed in school. If a student is caught chewing gum/eating a lollypop 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 2 truancies in 1 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

Only three weeks left until Easter holiday, I hope all Year 8s are out purchasing your Easter decorations and Easter eggs for the holidays. If anyone is interested my favourite is either Toblerone or Mini Egg, and Mrs Roe is not fussy!

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 need 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:

- Hattie, Emily B, Ben, Michael J, Stefan and Lincon have done a good job on their number challenges. Estupendo!
- Roxy has been a ray of sunshine to welcome back to school, with excellent teamwork skills and a diligent approach to her writing. Alfie is showing more confidence in sharing his ideas, particularly with teamwork.
- Sophia E and Ellie M for completing tasks with engagement and full understanding in maths.
- Brilliant effort in History and Art from the following students; Jess H, Johnson B, Bianca, Roxy, Megan, Sabine, Ella M, Jess S, Liy May B, Maxine, Evie, Phoebe, Gracie, Tilly, Esme, Leonardo, Joel M, Ben and Harrison B. All really excellent this week
- Shout out for Ashanti, Theo L, Neveah and Ellie for their work as Student Leaders - they have been working hard to make the community better.
- Hattie A for engagement in lessons and teamwork.
- Mason H-R for improved effort and attitude in English.
- Dymtro for always working hard in English.
- Demarco, Finley and Alessia did very well this week.
- And generally, I have many students making fantastic progress: Bianca, Stephan, Hattie, Phoebe A, Phoebe B, Amalie, Emily B, Lili, Jessica S, Lily-May, Johnson, Michael, Rowan, Archie, Lacey, Ben, Harrison B and Pavlou, Ashanti, Jack, Teja, Leonardo and Eva.

A busy week/weekend for Year 8 – netball tournaments next week/weekend:

Wednesday, 19 at Sprowston 1:30pm - 16:30pm

Saturday, 22 March at UEA 9:00 - 12:30pm

Monday, 24 Gresham's all day 8:30-16:00pm

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 8)

Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 8)

5. Year 9

I wanted to send my heartfelt thanks to all parents and students who attended the options evening on Tuesday night. We had an incredible turnout with 88 students coming! This shows how seriously the Year 9s are taking their option choices and bodes very well for the start of their crucial GCSE years. Hopefully they are now in the process of choosing their subjects and please encourage them to discuss with their tutors on Thursday mornings. We will hopefully see you at parents evening on the Tuesday, 25 March.

Please can I encourage you to ensure your child is in correct uniform from Monday. They will need to be in a blazer and skirts will need to be worn with leggings. If you are struggling to order any item or you have one on order please give your child a note explaining this.

Top achievement points this week are:

David	40
Rosie	40
Betsy	35
Shanelli	35
Ruby	35
Samuel	35
Munashe	35
Sav	33
Jasmin	30

These students are consistently showing commitment to their studies. Well done.

Teacher praise:

- Rowan for excellent engagement and effort in PE and Sav and Rosie for excellent work in passing and Sav for great coaching - Mrs Pearsall
- Aaliyah for excellent work and attitude in lesson - Miss Trail
- Kimberley has had a great attitude in English this week. Hope has thoughtful ideas and is becoming more confident in sharing with me. Hannah and Rowan are working hard on elevating their already excellent ideas in their paragraph responses. – Miss Chester
- Big well done to Jake, Skye and Taylor N for consistent engagement in English. Mrs Napthen
- Alfie L and Connor B for listening and applying the correct methods to find the equivalence for Fraction, Decimal and Percentages.- Mrs Marsham
- Issy for always being so engaged in her work and Charles and Cody for some excellent performances of Shakespearean insults! – Mrs Clayton
- George B for effort in English lessons and homework- Miss Roberts

Mr Walters (Head of Year 9)

Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 9)

6. Year 10

Students of the week:

Kate S, Martha W, Hannah S, Andreas, R, Mia P

Students with highest achievement points this week:

Riley B, Natacha F, Kate S, Kayden S and Marlia T.

Students with the highest achievement points this term:

- Riley W, Sasha-Mai, Ayo, Dylain, Alfie S and Kate S.
- Special mention to Zena this week, making so much progress with her German.
- Esme W for effort with homework in English.
- Owen B and Evie D for effort in science.
- Sasha and Oliver for always working so hard in English and remaining engaged in their work.
- Erica - for excellent work in netball - Miss Trail
- Martha and Hannah for excellent work in netball - Mrs Pearsall

The overwhelming majority of students wear their uniform correctly. Our expectation is that every student will be in full uniform, at all times (no hoodies or leggings). This also means correct length of skirt, blazers on and polishable black shoes. From Monday, 17 March, we will be challenging any student attending the

academy in the incorrect uniform. If a valid reason cannot be provided, with evidence/note from home, we will have to consider teaching them in our uniform and truancy reflection room until this is rectified. This will be away from their peers to reduce the effect on other students in the smooth running of the academy.

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

7. Year 11

PPE2 OVER AND OUT! Well done Year 11 for making it through another round of assessments! A huge well done for engaging with the process and working so hard – the vast majority of you have had a fantastic two weeks. These assessments will highlight your continued progress and provide a superb launchpad for the final prep you need to do in the 58 days you have left before your first exams in May. Please use this weekend to find that perfect revision/rest balance – recharging your batteries and having some chill time. If there is anything you need help with, need to discuss, or want to celebrate, I urge you to come and speak to me or Mrs Lamb in S58 or the year office.

Tutor Competition

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

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 12740. 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:

Shevaun, Larisa, Abi, Areen, Kayne, Ivan, Oscar, Jacob, William and Layla.

Praise

- Shout out to Kian W, Emilis V and Tyler P for good concentration during mock exams - Mrs Hughes
- Ty and Shevaun. For listening and applying the correct methods for mathematical problem solving - Mrs Marsham
- All of 11EN1 for their excellent efforts in their mock exams - with special mention to Larisa, Ayo, Brandon, Alex. Maizi and Riley – Mrs Clayton
- Jessie T for improved attendance and progress in PPE2.
- Ellie M for making fantastic progress in PPE2.
- Theo P for effort with revision and making great progress in PPE2.
- Madison G making great progress in PPE2.
- Leah S making great progress in PPE2 - Miss Roberts
- Mohammed S got one mark off a grade 5 in his mock listening!! Excellent work - Mrs McEvoy

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 your 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)
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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 and this will be a main focus in the Academy over the next few weeks. 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.



HUB Attendance Report Card – Week A

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 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.
- Letter regarding exams – Please make sure you have read the letter regarding exam conduct sent out! It is vital that we all adhere to the strict exam criteria set out by the exam boards – failure to do so could result in students being disqualified from certain exams – which would be a disaster after 2 years of such hard graft.
- Mobile Phone Bans – Please note that if you receive 2 mobile phone incidents on the system, we will be putting you on a phone ban - which means your phone will need to be handed in each morning and collected and 3pm each day – or not brought into school.
- Easter Eggs – As part of our fundraising for Prom we are holding an Easter Egg raffle in the last week of term! If you could donate an egg to the cause we would be most grateful! All eggs donated to be left at the Year 11 Office please.
- Hoodies - The closing date for ordering a Leavers Hoodie is Friday, 4 April (just before the Easter holidays) so please order a hoodie asap if your child would like one using the link below. If your child would like a hoodie but there is an issue with finances please contact Mrs Pearsall
ruth.pearsall@open-academy.org.uk
<https://www.schoolleaverscompany.co.uk/shop/7009?pwd=HDaBfAKa>

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)

8. Chaplain's Thought for the Week

Last week we talked about the value that you bring to the world and how that no one is like you and that you are priceless. As you will see below, God says the same to all of us now and even before we were conceived. As you read, let the words encourage and lift you, they bring purpose, hope and truth:

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me.

You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvellous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

How precious are your thoughts about me O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!

And when I wake up, you are still with me!

You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless.

Mark