



Dear Parents and Carers

14 January 2021

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your kind messages which you have emailed to myself and others or have relayed through conversations with colleagues over the last week. I have shared these with staff in the school and we are all very appreciative of your acknowledgements at this time.

I would also like to recognise your generosity and express a huge thank you to the very many parents who have already donated laptops for students to use during lockdown. We are keeping our 'Lets Localise' laptop campaign open. You can either donate a new or used laptop, Chromebook or tablet or contribute to the laptop fund which will be used to buy Chromebooks for students. Please visit <https://www.letslocalise.co.uk/school/oxford-spires-academy/sch119431/campaigns/> for more information.

Supporting your child to learn (good learning habits)

Many of you have asked how best you can support your child at home, Mr Masterson has kindly put together this guidance for you as parents and we hope you find this useful. Monday 11th at 9am we launched group assemblies online which guide your child through strategies that we have already been using in school which promote Best Learning.

We recognise that learning from home can be tricky for several reasons. Principally the physical environment of home is not linked with formal learning unlike the environment of the classroom. In other words, the association with the dining room table is not completing schoolwork but having dinner and socialising. We take this opportunity to share strategies which will help learning at home, view this as a menu to select from:

1. **Routines.** Establishing a routine is essential so that effective behaviours become embedded. Externally imposed routines are much harder to maintain however, allowing your child to write a routine and then through a guided conversation this can be theirs to own. This helps subsequent conversations if they fall out of the routine. Visual cues can help, which could take the form of a poster.
2. As you know sleep is essential and being in the same environment bedtimes can inch closer and closer towards midnight. This shift will either lead to a later waking time or reduced sleep which is costly in terms of productive learning behaviours and can affect things like patience and concentration levels. Students benefit from a set bedtime and providing an established screen-free time at least 30 minutes before bedtime can help any one of us get a better quality of sleep.
3. **Environment** – In an ideal world we would all have a dedicated room for studying, but as we know this is not always possible. So, you can turn your dining room table, old cabinet etc. into a workspace. The key to turning an area into a workspace is to remove the association linked to it. For example, if the dining table is the workspace it is important to remove food and ensure the environment is as quiet as possible. (studies have shown listening to classical music is useful but other genres are not going to help as background music).
4. The most important thing any learner can do is to try their best and produce the highest quality of work they can. We are not aiming for work to always be correct, incorrect application of knowledge can sometimes provide richer information which allows teachers to plan and address misconceptions. It is important to emphasise this to your child, try to encourage them to engage with teacher feedback as this is often the best forum to support progress.
5. Encourage regular breaks every 30 minutes. Discourage the use of game consoles, social media, or phone calls during these mini breaks as these will distract from work. Breaks should be 3-5 minutes and exciting hobbies and projects should be kept until the end of the learning day as a treat.
6. **Stop and check.** It is helpful to establish a routine of getting your child to log into Teams and show you the completed work they wish to submit/have submitted.



Remote Education further information

- To help with the structure of the day we are setting all the work for that day's lessons for 9.00am. We are encouraging all students to feedback to their teachers, and we are asking teachers to request feedback from students so that we can be responsive to the needs of individuals.
- We would like to introduce some live content with students as part of a blended learning offer. Live content in lessons will be signposted to the students through a live meeting invite. This will show in their assignment area and in their calendar. They will need to click to enter the meeting on the time shown on the invite (Aspects of live content is already being trialled by teachers in lessons)
- Tutors will also organise 2 tutor sessions using the live meeting invites. These are timetabled on a Wednesday and Friday morning from 9.00am. We will also be organising assemblies on a Monday morning and Achievement and Celebration events for students this term. Please see the grid below:

KS3 (7/8/9)	KS4 (10/11)	KS5 (12/13)
Monday -assembly HOH/HOY/SLT	Monday -assembly HOH/HOY/SLT	Students are being supported through their tutors and by the Sixth Form team.
Wednesday -Tutor session 9.00-9.15-We are asking that all students attend.	Wednesday -Tutor session 9.00-9.15 We are asking that all students attend	Achievement & Celebration event at the end of term (TBC)
Friday - Fun/ quiz tutor session 9.00-9.15 We are asking that all students attend.	Friday - Fun/ quiz tutor session 9.00-9.15 We are asking that all students attend.	
Achievement & Celebration event at the end of term (TBC)	Achievement & Celebration event at the end of term (TBC)	

Remote Education further online support

We have uploaded a series of videos to help parents and students to understand how we are delivering remote education and to show you how to use Teams. The videos are all available on this YouTube

Playlist: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-BXDPlvzRbmMdm3cNc9aVKb7yNXp4xIM>

- 1) An Introduction to remote education at OSA
- 2) How to log in to Microsoft Office & Teams
- 3) A tour of Microsoft Teams
- 4) How to find, submit and review assignments
- 5) How to take part in a live video conference

Number 5 is especially helpful as it shows students know how to access the morning registration and live sessions that teachers will be providing. Students should check the "Calendar" on Teams which will show when live sessions are planned. They can join the meeting from there by clicking on the event and then "Join" They will also see the session in their "Posts" page and the teachers will explain what to do in the "Assignments" section.



Sixth Form- News and messages

We were delighted to hear on Tuesday that 5 of our Year 13 students had offers from **Oxford University** - a reflection of the academic development of OSA Sixth Form over the last few years.

Successful students include: Linnet (one of our Head Students) has an offer to read Maths and Philosophy; Sara to read Medicine; Anna to read Biomedical Sciences; Adam to read Engineering; and Rosie to read Biological Sciences. (The science success this year balances our last two Oxford entrants who went to read English Language and Literature, and English and German!)

Year 11 students- If students would like to **join our Sixth Form** next year, the second Sixth Form Open Evening is taking place to help them make subject choices on Wednesday 20 January, from 5-7pm. Heads of Sixth Form subjects will have 15-minute sessions talking to students and parents about their course, ahead of the Sixth Form application deadline on 31 January. To book places for the Open Evening, please visit the Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oxford-spires-academy-sixth-form-open-evening-tickets-136327586481>

Other useful links for Sixth Form applications are:

- Dr Watsons presentation from the December Open Evening - <https://youtu.be/xGcuxPW34ko>
- The application form- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFxFgBgaMBVDGhurtjygmGBWsAjl_9BNA6NmIUdQRXLzykCA/viiewform
- The Sixth Form prospectus: <https://www.oxfordspiresacademy.org/download/documents/OSA-6th-Form-Prospectus-2021.pdf>

House wellbeing challenge (Spring Term)

We all know how important wellbeing is to us all and especially to our students at this time. Our Pastoral and House focus this term will be based on the Theme- 5 Ways to Wellbeing. This has already been launched to students this week in the Wednesday morning live and recorded assembly delivered by Ms Woodworth-Sturla.

THEME	5 WAYS TO WELLBEING
MINDFULNESS MONDAY	PAY ATTENTION
CHALLENGE TUESDAY	LEARN NEW SKILLS
WELLBEING WEDNESDAY	CONNECT WITH OTHERS
THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY	GIVE TO OTHERS
FITNESS FRIDAY	BE ACTIVE

WHO WILL LEAD THE WAY FOR THEIR HOUSE? STARTS MONDAY 18TH JANUARY
WATCH OUT ON THE HOUSE TEAM FOR YOUR DAILY CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH WHILST ALSO EARNING HOUSE POINTS.

As part of wellbeing, we need to think about elements such as sleep / exercise / water and thinking about others (giving). These aspects will be explored further in tutor sessions and assemblies in the coming weeks.

The House Challenge for this term will be linked to wellbeing and students will have the opportunity to complete the challenge, share their experiences and discuss them in the House teams. We will share some of the best challenges on the school website and in parent/student updates.

I hope that you find this update useful, as always please do contact us if you require any further support. Please continue to look after yourselves and families.

Best of wishes
Marianne Blake