



## JULY 2021 UPDATE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS – YEAR 12

What a Year 12 it has been! I'd like to begin with a thank you for all your support as the school has worked with Sixth Form students this year, trying to keep their academic work and career planning on track despite all that has happened. They have been a very positive and committed year group and the Sixth Form staff have been delighted to see them back on site and working so well over the last weeks. We wish you all a very good and healthy summer!

### Farewells

We are sorry to say goodbye at the end of this term to Miss Marianne Blake, who has been a hugely supportive Principal for students and staff for the last four years. And what a four years that has been! Facing unprecedented challenges during those years, culminating in 18 months of pandemic and lockdown, we are grateful for her calm and positive approach to all she has had to deal with. Under her Principalship, students have continued to thrive academically and to develop personally, and we thank her for all the hard work she has put in to ensure that this has happened, despite all the world had to throw at her! We all wish her every success in her next headship. We also send warmest good wishes to the following staff as they move on to new roles in September: Miss A Boyd (English), Mrs M Coelho-Wilson (maths), Mrs S Downes (Counsellor), Mr P Gill (science) Mr S Masterson (Vice Principal/PE) Mr M Rugna (languages) and Ms L Smith (RE). Finally, we wish Ms C Atkinson a long and happy retirement and thank her for her years of dedicated service to our community.

### A message from Mr Hebblethwaite, our incoming Principal

I am delighted to be joining the excellent team at OSA in September. Clearly it has been a very difficult period in education, but I am hugely optimistic that the new academic year and beyond will be very successful. Alongside the continuous drive to improve the quality of learning for all students, our main focus at OSA when we return will be re-establishing routines and high expectations. I look forward to building strong relationships with parents and carers as we continue our mission to ensure that OSA delivers a first-class education for your daughter/son. I will write to you again early in the new term, and I wish you and your family a safe and happy summer holiday.

### Careers and UCAS

All parents had an email last week with information from our Year 12 Careers and Research Week. Thanks again to all students for their active participation in this event which enabled them to do important work planning their futures. Students learnt about university applications, and began application forms online. They also found out about apprenticeships, gap years and finance. Over the summer, students should be making decisions about what they wish to apply for in September, adding as much as they can to their UCAS application forms if that is a university place, and beginning to draft personal statements (whether they are applying to UCAS or not as all applications will require a statement!).

A reminder that all students applying to university should be putting forms in by October half-term, and if students are applying to Oxford or Cambridge, or for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine, they





need to get their forms to Dr Watson by 30 September 2021. These last courses often involve admissions tests, and students need to check what is required, and how to put in an entry for these.

Any questions from parents about careers or UCAS (or anything else!) just email Dr Watson

[jwatson@spires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:jwatson@spires.anthemtrust.uk)

### Extended Projects

We opened up applications for EPQs during Careers and Research Week too, and Dr Watson explained the benefits of doing a piece of university-style work as they make applications next year.

Students who wish to take one of these research projects need to fill in an application form, begin their research and complete p5 of the research log over the summer. Copies of the paperwork for EPQ have been emailed to students on 13 July.

### Rising Year 13 Meetings, Year 12 mock results and making up gaps in learning

All students finishing Year 12 this year have had an individual Teams meeting this week with Dr Watson, Ms Harry or Mr Loftus. In it they were given the results of their Year 12 exams (which should now be visible to parents on Go4Schools) and they have discussed plans for next year's courses, as well as their career planning so far. Staff have given them advice on what to do over the summer if a subject is not going as well as they had hoped, and students are encouraged to contact teachers in their subjects by email if they would like more specific guidance.

We realise that this last year has been a difficult one for many students and teachers are keen to help them make up any gaps in learning. This very much varies from subject to subject at this level, though, and students or parents are advised to contact subject teachers directly with any queries (copying in Dr Watson ideally so that she is aware and can support).

### Work Experience

As most students have been unable to undertake in-person work experience this year, the school has bought into a Virtual Work Experience programme that helps to fill some gaps. All students have been emailed the log-in details for this, and can access the site over the summer too. We are happy to support any students who plan to undertake work experience early next year (provided they discuss precise dates with Sixth Form staff), especially if they are doing a university course that expects them to have undertaken such a placement.

### Asymptomatic Testing

As pupils will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, all secondary school pupils are being offered 2 on-site lateral flow device tests for their return in the autumn term.

**We will be asking all students to come onsite on Thursday 2nd September 2021 for their 1st test.**

Please see the Covid testing schedule enclosed.



## Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Promoting healthy lifestyles is given a high priority at Oxford Spires Academy. From Year 7 we teach our students the skills and knowledge needed to make good decisions about their physical and mental health.

One important aspect of our Personal, Social, and Health Education programme is an emphasis on the dangers of substance abuse. Students learn about the harmful effects of the misuse of alcohol and drugs. We also make students aware of the consequences of criminal convictions for possession and use of drugs and antisocial behaviour caused by excessive alcohol consumption. Before the start of a new academic year, it is timely to remind students and their parents of one important aspect of our behaviour policy. If students choose to bring drugs or alcohol onto the school site they will face the most serious consequences, in most cases permanent exclusion is the likely outcome. Please be assured such events are rare but students need to understand the consequences if they choose to make a foolish decision in this regard.

## Good News!

After a pause in many of our usual extra-curricular events due to lockdown, OSA has had a very successful final term! We were delighted to see Martha (Year 10) reach the national final of the English Speaking Union's Performing Shakespeare competition, and come joint third out of the final 16 speakers. Judges commented on her talent in her recreation of the character of Kate in Henry IV, Part 1. As well as national competitions in speaking, we were also very pleased to see our teams at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 win their heats of the Anthem Trust competition, Speak Up, on Friday 2 July. Congratulations to Merca (Speaker), Rose (Chair), Erik (Vote of Thanks) at Key Stage 3, and Ayesha (Speaker), Dora (Chair) and Emily (Questioner) at Key Stage 4. Thank you too to our excellent Sixth Form debaters, Daisy and Buster who argued articulately in their round.

## Commitment to enrichment

As the recent good news section shows, Oxford Spires continues with its commitment to enriching its students to build their wider skills and knowledge. Despite the difficulties of lockdown, we have provided opportunities (often online last year) and we have a very full programme of House events, extra-curricular clubs, and super curricular learning planned for the year ahead. Whether students are interested in maths or public speaking, acting or sport, music or chess, there will be something to suit everyone! Sixth Form students will once again have the chance to lead younger school clubs and competitions next year if COVID 'bubbles' are discontinued.

A new initiative this next year will involve a group of students from all years, led by Sixth Form, working with academics and theatre practitioners to create their own production of The Winter's Tale in the summer, and we already have plans for several year groups to work again with the Ashmolean and the Bodleian.

We really look forward to offering our usual in-person supercurricular events across Oxford for Sixth Formers, so far as safety allows, in the new academic year.



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## Key Dates

September 2021	
Thurs 2nd	Asymptomatic testing all students (1st test)
Mon 6th	Asymptomatic testing all students (2nd test). All Year 12 students due into school for 8.45am for an initial tutor session.
October 2021	
Thurs 14th	Open Evening
Fri 22nd	Last day of term 1

**Structure of the day 2021-22 – Sixth Form students to arrive no later than 8.45am to register in lesson 1 or the Common Room.**

Monday - Thursday	
8:35-8:45	(Tutor for lower school)
8:45-9:45	Lesson 1
9:45-10:45	Lesson 2
10:45-11:05	Break
11:05-12:05	Lesson 3
12:05-13:05	Lesson 4
13:05-13:40	Lunch
13:40-14:10	Pastoral/tutor/assembly
14:10-15:10	Lesson 5
15:10-16:10	Lesson 6

Friday	
8:35-8:45	(Tutor for lower school)
8:45-9:45	Lesson 1
9:45-10:45	Lesson 2
10:45-11:05	Break
11:05-12:05	Lesson 3
12:05-13:05	Lesson 4
13:05-13:40	Lunch
13:40-13:45	Transition
13:45-14:45	Lesson 5

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and relaxing summer, and we look forward to welcoming all students back in September.