



JULY 2021 UPDATE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS – YEAR 8

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.

Uniform and equipment from September: high expectations

We believe that strong uniform standards engender a sense of community and unity, and really makes OSA students stand out in the local community. We also believe that all students must have the equipment they need (pens, pencils etc.) to learn effectively. In preparation for September please see the attached uniform and equipment document, which also includes the new procedures if a student arrives at school in incorrect uniform. We appreciate your co-operation making sure that all OSA students are smart and well equipped.

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.

Year 9 responsive curriculum summary

In Year 8 students lacked access to practical subjects. This is redressed in Year 9 with full access to all practical facilities and a full curriculum alongside a programme of events and tutor sessions to support them make the right choices for KS4. Teachers will be carefully monitoring the progress of students and providing support to meet individual needs. For all years: A rich programme of extracurricular and support activities will be on offer for all students. A calendar will be published in September.

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 you are interested in maths or public speaking, acting or sport, music or chess, there will be something to suit everyone! We have continued, for instance, to offer Duke of Edinburgh through much of this year, and plan to enable students in Year 11 next year to complete their expedition and gain their Bronze Awards. Students in Years



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9 and 10 next year, who would like to join D of E Bronze, will have the chance to sign up after assemblies early in the year. As another example, a new initiative this next year will involve a group of students from a wide range of years working with academics and theatre practitioners to create their own production of *The Winter's Tale* in the summer, and we have plans for several year groups to work again with the Ashmolean and the Bodleian. We really look forward to being able to take students to in-person events as we have in the past, so far as safety allows, in the new academic year.

Key Dates

September 2021	
Thurs 2 nd	Asymptomatic testing all students (1 st test)
Mon 6 th	Term 1 starts Year 9 8.30am Asymptomatic testing all students (2 nd test)
October 2021	
Thurs 14 th	Open Evening
Fri 22 nd	Last day of term 1

Structure of the day – Students to arrive no later than by 8.30am.

Monday - Thursday		Friday	
8:35-8:45	Tutor	8:35-8:45	Tutor
8:45-9:45	Lesson 1	8:45-9:45	Lesson 1
9:45-10:45	Lesson 2	9:45-10:45	Lesson 2
10:45-11:05	Break	10:45-11:05	Break
11:05-12:05	Lesson 3	11:05-12:05	Lesson 3
12:05-13:05	Lesson 4	12:05-13:05	Lesson 4
13:05-13:40	Lunch	13:05-13:40	Lunch
13:40-13:45	Transition	13:40-13:45	Transition
13:45-14:10	Tutor and Assemblies	13:45-14:45	Lesson 5
14:10-15:10	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.