



31 March 2021

Dear Parent and Carers,

First of all, my best wishes to you all. As always, I would like to begin by thanking you for all of your support. I am extremely proud of how quickly students are settling back into the routines of school. We want to work with you to ensure that we provide the best support to our students and we want to help them to feel confident in themselves and to also feel confident in their learning. Thank you all for taking the time to complete our Remote Education Survey – we are taking all your feedback on board and will communicate further with you about this next term.

Everyone's Invited testimonies

Many of you will be aware of the media coverage this week around the testimonies of peer-on-peer abuse posted on the Everyone's Invited website. It has been recognised that much of this abuse occurs outside of school and is not a problem that schools can solve alone, but we do have a vital role to play in creating a safe environment for our children and in educating them about relationships.

We take this responsibility very seriously at Oxford Spires. Promoting healthy relationships and developing a very clear understanding of sexual consent feature prominently in our PSHE curriculum. We work hard to create a culture of kindness and respect in the school and are proud of our pastoral structures that allow anyone to report concerns and seek support when they need it. Please be assured that we take any such disclosures extremely seriously.

Best Self & our student's wellbeing

Please find attached a copy of the March newsletter from our Oxfordshire Secondary Health Team. Please take a moment to read this, there are some useful links to support parents and students.

In school will be following the key principles outlined within the '5 ways to Wellbeing'. These principles are included in our School Values, and we have carefully planned this into our PSHE, tutor and assembly programmes for the summer term.

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing



Best Learning and our curriculum support

Following the period of lockdown, teams have developed robust plans to put in place some catch-up provision for all students. As we begin to move forward, we have also put in place the following for the summer term;

- All students studying the full curriculum at KS3 and all KS3 students have access to specialist rooms and practical lessons in all subjects.
- A strong focus on Reading Matters, which from next term will include a dedicated library day after school as well as the introduction of our OSA Reading Together scheme:
 - For Years 7 and 8, this will involve, among other things, class read-aloud (teacher reading) sessions for 20 minutes, three times a week, with discussion and comprehension activities at end of the reading.
 - For Year 9, reading for pleasure will be encouraged through reading groups and competitions based around reading and reviewing books in the OSA 'cannon'.

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Please do support our Reading Matters agenda and encourage your child to try to read for at least 30 minutes each day.

- Additional tutoring, mentoring and support. If students are not making expected progress, they will be given extra help in sessions before and after school. We will contact you if your son or daughter is involved.
- Continued use of Teams to support home learning.
- Enrichment opportunities will continue to be promoted via Teams chat pages. A new programme of in-school activities will start after Easter; further details to follow.

Extra-curricular activities

We will start to expand our extra-curricular and include additional face-to-face afterschool revision and coursework sessions after the holiday. Mrs Poyser has produced an extra-curricular timetable, and this will be released to you and to students when we return. Here are some key dates:

- **D of E**- We are unable to facilitate this at this time and will start our D of E provision again in September.
- **Whole School Sports Days**- Sports days will now take place on Thursday, 8 July and Friday, 9 July.
- **OSA Arts Week**- from 5 July, a new performance / exhibition will be released to parents to watch and enjoy.
- **Years 7 and 8 Activity Fun Days** - We are conscious that Years 7 and 8 will miss the opportunity to attend camp this year, so we have put in place on-site fun days on Monday, 5 July (Year 8) and Tuesday, 6 July (Year 7). Full details will be sent to you in a parent communication at the start of the next term.
- **Year 6 Transition Days**- Thursday, 1 July & Friday 2 July. KS3 student leaders will be invited to support our Year 6 students across these two days.

IntoUniversity enrichment opportunities

We are delighted that the popular **IntoUniversity** workshops for Year 8 students will restart in Term 5 after Easter (10 May 2021). We have an opportunity to increase the numbers accessing this programme of study skills and careers guidance. Please contact Mrs Wilkinson or Dr Watson if your child meets the following criteria:

1 st Criteria - students meet ONE or more of the following:	2 nd Criteria - students meet TWO or more of the following:
In receipt of Free School Meals Eligible for Pupil Premium Grant Child Looked After Household income under £25,000 a year Lives in Social Housing*	English as an Additional Language First generation to go to university in the UK Special Educational Needs Young Carer Refugee/Asylum Seeker status

In addition, **IntoUniversity** are offering a virtual programme of enrichment over the Easter holiday. To sign up for these events a Parent or Carer must complete this online permission form: [Click here to access the form.](#)

University Taster – Learn more about what life at university is like and meet some current university students. For Years 7 to 9 on Friday, 9 April, 13:45-16:00.

Business in FOCUS – Try out entrepreneurial skills first-hand in a business challenge and meet a range of professionals working in various careers. For Years 9 – 11 on Wednesday 14 April 13:45-16:30.

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Careers in FOCUS – Meet a range of professionals working in the healthcare sector for an insight into their careers. For Years 9 – 11 on Friday, 16 April, 14:00-17:00.

Interventions

We will continue with our programmes of Lexia and Accelerated Reader to improve literacy in Years 7 and 8. In addition to this we are working on the implementation of a new programme for Year 9 students called Catch Up Literacy which is a structured intervention proven to significantly improve the achievement of students who find literacy difficult.

Best Community and our pastoral support

House News: The 2021 House competition is hotly contended. At the end of the Spring term there is less than 3000 points separating the four houses. Students are awarded house points for effort and work in lessons and contribution to the wider school life. Please continue to check Go4Schools for individual rewards and sanctions recording.

Spring Term Results	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Overall
1 st Place	Earhart	Tolkien	Seacole	Tolkien	Bannister	Tolkien
2 nd Place	Bannister	Bannister	Earhart	Bannister	Seacole	Bannister
3 rd Place	Tolkien	Seacole	Tolkien	Seacole	Earhart	Earhart
4 th Place	Seacole	Earhart	Bannister	Earhart	Tolkien	Seacole

TEAM OSA: Together Everyone Achieves More

Through our pastoral and Head of Year assemblies we have been sharing important messages about getting back into the right mindset for school and being ‘ready to learn’. We have also spoken to the students about how we all need to work together to ensure the schools is a safe and happy place for everyone. Respect for every member of staff and our peers is central to this. We have also used the theme of Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day to talk about strong and brilliant women throughout history and how we tackle prejudice, whilst also highlighting the need for women (and indeed everyone) to feel safe.

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English Speaking Union success

Public speaking competitions have continued as normal this year, although in a virtual format. The English Speaking Union Churchill competition is for students in Years 9-11. You may remember the article in our Student Gallery January 2021, that OSA entered two teams into the first round, one from Year 10 and one from Year 9. We were the only state school in our heat and were delighted when the Year 9 team were selected to go through to the Southern Regional Final.

The Southern Regional Final took place on Wednesday, 24 March (once again via Zoom). This was a tough competition even before the students had to cope with various technical difficulties. OSA competitors Skyla and Olivia were the two youngest there, and we were thrilled when Skyla was awarded the prize for the best individual speaker and the team were awarded the runner up prize, putting them as one of the top 24 teams in the country (out of over 400 entries). They just missed out on a place in the National Final, but the last time we had Year 9s in the regional final, they made it all the way to Nationals the following year, so watch out for this group next year!

Lights! Camera! Action!

I think we would all agree that one of the really fun things about schools is the extra-curricular. Sadly, for the past few months the extra-curricular activities have been somewhat thin on the ground—However, the Oxford Spires Creative Arts Faculty are planning a Summer Spectacular (it will not be live) but from Monday, 5 July, for one week, a new performance or exhibition will be released to parents to watch and enjoy. All work will be pre-recorded and edited, it will include - recitals from Year 12 musicians, dance from Year 7 performers, Year 8 will be acting, Year 9 will be dancing, Year 10 will be sharing composition work and performances.

We will celebrate the amazing talent we have at Oxford Spires!

LAMDA Grade 8

At the start of 2019 the first group of eager Year 12s started to study for their LAMDA Grade 8 Gold Award in Acting – sadly just before their exam the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the performance exam had to be rescheduled. Flash forward to September 2020 and another group of Year 12 students starting their LAMDA Grade 8 Gold Award in Acting – along with the original cohort.

On 14 December, a hugely talented and committed group of students finally completed their examination. For some their hard work and focus had lasted nearly a year for others it was a matter of just three months. However, every single student passed with a Merit or a Distinction, meaning they join a very elite group of able students who take the Grade 8 Gold Award in Acting – a nationally and internationally recognised qualification.



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Finally, some important reminders...

Phones

These should remain switched off and in bags between 8.30 and 3.10. Any member of staff may confiscate a phone if it is being used during the school day without permission. Any confiscated phones can be collected from reception at the end of the day.

During lockdown students have been forced to be plugged into tech in order to support their learning. Now we are back in school we need to take every opportunity to re-connect in person. This includes lessons and break / lunch.

Uniform

We have been carrying out uniform checks as pupils enter the gate each morning. On the whole uniform is good with students wearing their house tie and jumper with pride. Any hoodies or jumpers **MUST** be removed at the gate. Coats can continue to be worn in and around school. As the shops start to re-open over the Easter break parents should be able to address any other uniform issues regarding correct footwear and appropriate trousers or skirts. We look forward to every pupil returning after Easter looking smart and ready for the summer term.

Lateness

For a small number of pupils returning to school, getting back into the routine of getting up and out of the house has been a challenge! Any time not in school is a missed learning opportunity so please be on-time in the morning and in between lessons. School begins at 8.30am for Years 7-9 and 8.45am for Years 10 and 11. Any lateness to lessons will result in a 20-minute detention at the end of the day.

My very best wishes for you and all your family, please enjoy your break over the holiday and I look forward to welcoming back students on Monday, 19 April.

Miss M Blake - Principal

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