



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;

- Targeted students will receive tutoring sessions over the Easter period which will help to accelerate learning.
- National Tutoring Programme for English and maths which is supporting learning for in-class assessments.
- Restructuring our learning guidance, we will use tutor sessions, academic mentoring, and workshops to strengthen our student's knowledge and understanding to support effective revision and recall.
- A strong focus on Reading Matters, which from next term will start OR Reading Together programme.
- Careers interviews and careers support will be brought forward this year for students in Year 10.
- Each faculty team have reviewed and developed their planning to ensure that we can address any missed opportunities for learning from lockdown.

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- 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:

- **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.
- **Work Experience-** Due to the on-going complexities we are unable to put in place work experience this year. We have planned additional careers input and more information will follow in the summer term.
- **Year 11 Leavers Day-** The final date for the assessment grades will be the last week of term. The students last day will officially be on Friday 21 May 2021.
- **Academic Mentors-** We will be recruiting for a small number of Year 11 as paid roles as academic mentors in the summer term. We will request a short letter of application and we will conduct a short interview. Details will follow after we return.
- **Year 11 Prom:** Prom is provisionally booked for 2<sup>nd</sup> July. We have chosen to move this onto the school site due to a number of various factors. Tickets will go on sale after Easter once all elements have been confirmed. Students will need to have over 90% attendance, less than 30 negative behaviour points and less than 10 late arrivals to school between now and the 21st May to be able to attend.
- **Sixth Form Taster Weeks** - Dates and further information to be shared after Easter.

### Duke of Edinburgh Award

Due to Covid-19 we have had to adapt our Duke of Edinburgh scheme this academic year. Next term we will be planning on how to set up the awards for anyone interested in joining in September. We are also arranging how we will support those students who were unable to complete their expeditions this time round. All information will be coming out in a parent communication soon.

### IntoUniversity enrichment opportunities

We are delighted that the popular **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.](#)

**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.

**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.

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### 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 <sup>st</sup> Place	Earhart	Tolkien	Seacole	Tolkien	Bannister	Tolkien
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Bannister	Bannister	Earhart	Bannister	Seacole	Bannister
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Tolkien	Seacole	Tolkien	Seacole	Earhart	Earhart
4 <sup>th</sup> 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.

### 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!

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### 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.



### **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.

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### 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Miss M Blake', is positioned above the printed name.

Miss M Blake - Principal

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