



# PARENT & CARER GUIDE 2025-26

Oxford Spires Academy



# WELCOME



This guide provides our wider community with relevant information to support you and your child understand the opportunities and expectations at the academy for 2025-26 academic year.

Our mission is clear and simple: we provide a structured, disciplined working environment in which every student receives high-quality teaching and to reach their full potential. We celebrate diversity, promote a culture of respect and inclusivity, and equip our students with the knowledge, skills, and character traits needed to thrive in an ever-changing world. At Oxford Spires Academy we strongly believe that when we work together as a cohesive community, we can create an environment that nurtures the academic, social, and emotional development of our students.

We ask our community to actively participate and contribute to the direction of the academy by attending parent evenings, joining in school events, and sharing your valuable perspectives. Your involvement is essential in creating a vibrant and supportive educational community.

*We believe that with the right learning environment there is no limit to what your child can achieve. We build confidence by modelling and directly teaching students how to work hard. By utilising the most current research, we ensure pupils are able to retain and recall the knowledge that will support them build a network of knowledge that they can use flexibly and with confidence.*

*We want our students to be aspirational and recognise that in order to achieve this they must believe in themselves and know the steps for academic success. They must also make decisions that will keep them safe and healthy both physically and mentally.* Mrs L Cowley, Headteacher



# KEY DATES



Our academic calendar operates **3 cycles**, each **12 weeks** in length. We publish our curriculum online for each cycle and provide a physical copy to every student in The OSA Scholar's Guide.

- \* This supports pupils to plan ahead and know what to expect at different points in the academic year
- \* This supports our wider community to prepare and engage with the OSA curriculum at home
- \* This supports staff with workload and curriculum planning

*Please see our parental calendar on the school website for an up to date list of key academy events.*

## STUDENT PROGRESS MEETINGS

Every year group will have one consultation evening each academic year. This is the opportunity for parents, carers and teachers to discuss how they can work together to ensure your child reaches their full potential.

### STUDENT PROGRESS MEETINGS:

Year 7 - 13th November	Year 8 - 26th March	Year 9 - 29th January
Year 10 - 30th April	Year 11 - 11th December	
Year 12 - 13th November	Year 13 - 26th March	

## PASTORAL CONFERENCE - MEET YOUR CHILDS FORM TUTOR - 2nd October

Our Meet the Form Tutor event allows all parents and carers to meet with their child's form tutor and have feedback on their progress and engagement at the start of the academic year.

## KEY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

10th September - Sixth Form Parent/Carer Information Evening  
How to support your child's success in Sixth Form

27th November - Sixth Form Open Evening  
Support and guidance on preparing your children for the demands of national exams.

14th January - Yr 9 Planning Your Next Steps  
Support and guidance on guiding your children to make informed subject choices for Year 10 and 11.

January - Yr11 Revision Strategy Evening  
Support and guidance on preparing your children for the demands of national exams.

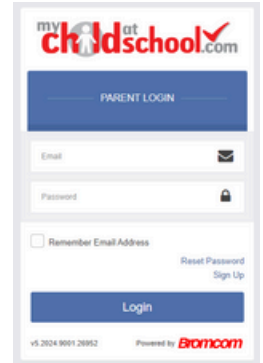
# COMMUNICATION



We use the *My Child At School* app to communicate with parents and carers

The My Child At School App (MCAS) will keep track of:

- Your child's behaviour,
- View attendance records, notify the academy of absences,
- Access their weekly timetable, see academic reports and assessment scores,
- Book parents' evening appointments,
- View assigned homework tasks,
- Track scheduled detentions and,
- View announcements from the academy. If you have more than one child, you can access MCAS information about your children from a single, centralised parent account.



If you have any problems logging into MCAS please email [info@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:info@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk)

We recognise the importance of effective communication and fostering strong relationships with the school community. We are committed to keeping parents, carers and the wider community informed and engaged in our journey.

Staff have full timetables, including teaching commitments, meetings and enrichment activities, which means that it is unlikely that they will be immediately available. We will do our best to respond to you within two full working school days.

- Emails are sent to parents/carers using the contact information held on our system.
- Letters are usually sent by email, if you require a printed copy please let us know and we will be happy to provide this.
- Parents' evening bookings: Bookings are via MCAS and email with instructions will be sent the approximately 2 weeks before the event.

Look out for our Oxford Spires Academy newsletter where we share key updates and reminders alongside celebrating the successes and achievements of our students.

# THE SCHOOL DAY

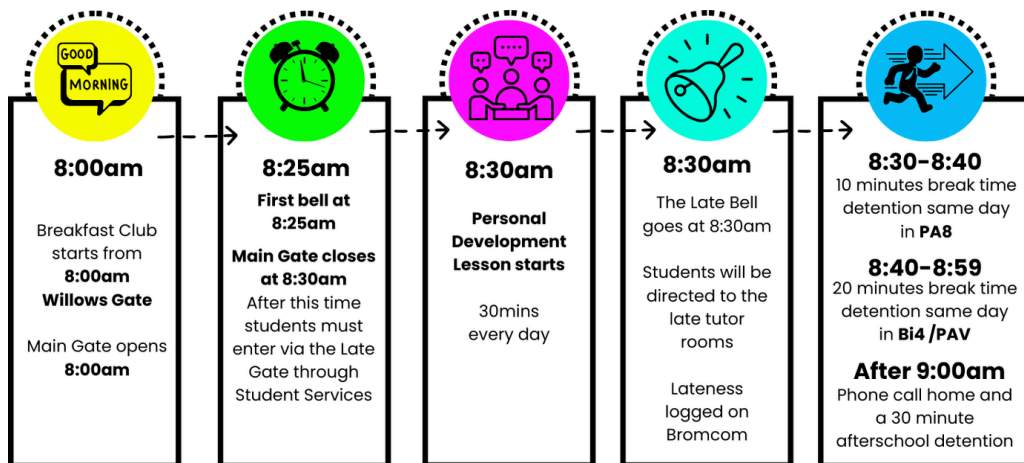


Time	Lesson
8:30-9:00	Tutor Time
9:00-10:00	Period 1
10:00-11:00	Period 2
11:00-11:30	Break Time 1
11:30-12:30	Period 3
12:30-13:30	Period 4
13:30-14:00	Break Time 2
14:00-15:00	Period 5



# START OF THE DAY

- Students should arrive by 8:20am each morning ready for a prompt start to morning personal development at 8:30am with your tutor.
- Our Student Services office is open to all students from 8:10am for support with equipment and uniform.



# THE SCHOLAR'S GUIDE

At OSA the intent of our curriculum is very clear; we want to prepare all of our students to have successful and happy futures. In order to achieve this we have developed challenging, knowledge intensive curriculums.

## A FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE

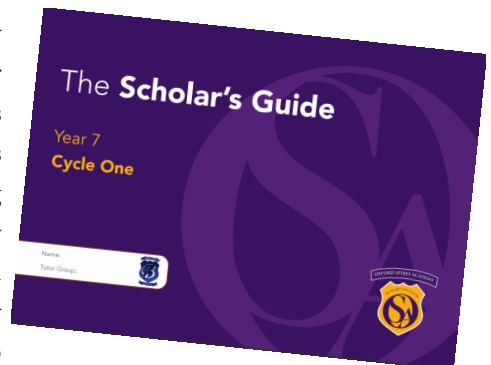
The only difference between a subject expert and a novice is how much knowledge they have about that topic and how well that knowledge is organised in their memory. When knowledge is well structured, it becomes meaningful and can be used to solve complex and interesting problems. Our subject teams have selected the most relevant and important knowledge to be taught across Years 7 – 9 in order to prepare our students to thrive in the world, as well as supporting students to make informed choices about their GCSE study.

## COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND MEMORY

We know from current research that our working memory is very limited (*it can only store between 4-7 pieces of new information in one go*) this has huge implications for how we plan and teach our curriculum. We also know that our long term memory, where all of the things we have learnt are stored, has an unlimited capacity. This is why subject leaders have developed their curricular to ensure that lessons and learning builds on previous knowledge and therefore takes on deeper meaning and understanding as time goes by.

## BUILDING SCHEMA

If we want students to remember the information that they learn, they need to be able to connect it to other information in their long term memory. When this happens an interconnected network of knowledge forms called a Schema. Students need to connect current learning with what they have learnt previously and relate new information to old information to prevent it from disappearing from their memories. Teachers will explicitly make links between the information they teach, and help students to build a detailed, easily recalled web of knowledge in student's long term memory.



Our Scholar's Guide share a comprehensive week by week guide to the curriculum taught in each subject. All students are provided with a physical copy at the start of each cycle. An electronic copy of this can be found on our website.

# SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Email [safeguarding@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:safeguarding@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk) or visit us in Room Z14 & Z15



## SAFEGUARDING

Do you have any concerns?



**Ms Baker**  
Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



**Ms Henry**  
Deputy Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



### **Whisper Box - Outside Library** **Whisper Button - OSA Website**

A way for you to report your concerns anonymously



### **Who is your trusted Adult?**

A trusted adult is someone who listens and who you can go to for help, support and safety whenever you need it. Remember to reach out when you need it!



### **Contact the Safeguarding Team**

You can email the team via  
[safeguarding@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:safeguarding@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk)  
or visit the team in room Z14 & Z15

The OSA Way

Please remember we are a nut free school

#Bekind

**Sharing and updating medical information:** Parents and carers can update medical information by emailing [info@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:info@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk)



# KEEPING YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

- *Need some immediate support but school is closed?*
- *Need some advice to keep safe from harm, but school is closed?*
- *Need to help a friend but school is closed which is where you would usually get advice?*

## **Feeling unsafe and at risk of harm?**

- 101 – non-emergency
- 999 – emergency
- Childline – 0800 11 11 – a source of counselling help and support for all young people

## **Need urgent support around mental health?**

- Oxford Samaritans
- Call – 116 123 (free from any phone)
- Walk-in – 60 Magdalen Street, OX4 1RB (8am-10pm every day)
- 999 – Emergency Number
- 111 – non-emergency medical help

## **Generic advice and support**

- *Speak to a parent/carer or other trusted adult*
- *Speak to a friend*
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> - an organisation which protects young people online
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/> - the leading UK charity supporting young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health
- *Apps designed to support with mental health are available to download*

# CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS



At Oxford Spires Academy we are passionate about praising our students and their endeavors both in and outside of the classroom and we are committed to sharing these with parents and carers.

There are a number of ways students can gain 'Aspire Points' (awarded through MCAS) in their classroom from their teacher in every lesson.

Aspire Point can be spent in the Sixth Form run reward shop every breaktime.

**A**rticulation Points for clear verbal communication using academic vocabulary. "Speak like a Scholar"

**S**cholar Points for ambitious contributions in lessons and towards your homework.

**P**articipation Points will be awarded for taking part in lessons and during wider school life at OSA.

**I**nnovation Points for creative thought and contributing new ideas in class and during extra-curricular.

**R**eadng Points for dedication towards the tutor reading programme, reading in your subjects and in your library lessons.

**E**mpathy Points for showing kindness and consideration to others.

## COMMUNITY LEADER AWARD

Our Community Leader Award is given each week to students who have gone out of their way, either in or outside of school, to demonstrate community leadership.

## SUBJECT AWARD

At the end of each academic cycle (there are three per year) subject leaders select two students in each year group who have demonstrated academic excellence and progress for their subject. These students receive a badge and certificate at a celebration assembly.

## TOP 25 STUDENT AWARD

At the end of each cycle the top performing 25 students (across all their subjects) in each year will have their names displayed on the 'Leaders Legends' board and receive either a bronze, silver or gold badge depending on the number of times they make the board.

## FRI YAY - 100% ATTENDANCE (measured weekly)

Attendance is crucial to being successful at school but also successful in the wider world of work. We value attendance hugely and at the end of the year give lots of rewards such as trips, badges and special lunches for those students who have remained consistent throughout the year.

# CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS



At Oxford Spires Academy, our House System is central to building a sense of identity, teamwork, and school spirit. Every student and their family becomes part of one of our four Houses upon joining the school

## The Four Houses

**Bannister:** Named after Sir Roger Bannister, the first man to run a mile in under four minutes.

*House Values: Kindness, Perseverance, Staying Focused.*

**Earhart:** Named after Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

*House Values: Challenging Conventions, Adventure, Courage.*

**Seacole:** Named after Mary Seacole, a pioneering Jamaican nurse known for her service during the Crimean War.

*House Values: Compassionate, Dedicated, Inspiration.*

**Tolkien:** Named after J.R.R. Tolkien, Oxford academic and author of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.

*House Values: Creativity, Commitment, Friendship.*

## House Competitions

Throughout the academic year, students take part in a range of House Competitions that allow them to explore their talents and contribute to the success of their House. Events are spread across three cycles and include competitions in sport, the arts, languages, science, business, and more.

## The OSA House Honours

There are 3 levels of awards available to recognise students commitment to the OSA values and representing their House:

- House Half Colours (awarded at the end of each cycle)
- House Full Colours (awarded at the end of each cycle)
- House Honours (awarded at the end of the academic year)

Please note - there are different criteria for KS3, KS4 and KS5 - each are detailed in the relevant Scholars Guide.

Example of KS3 criteria:

**Be Engaged!**  
**OSA HOUSE HONOURS**

**How to earn**

- Half Colours: Three items from each category
- Full Colours: Six items from each category
- Honours: Nine items from each category

**Awards**

- Year 7 - Honours Badge
- Year 8 - Honours Jumper
- Year 9 - Honours Blazer
- Year 10 - Honours Tie
- Year 11 - Honours plaque
- Sixth Form - Theatre Chair

Academic	Community	Extra Curricular
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book Report</li><li>• Attend meet the tutor evening</li><li>• Attend Student Progress evening</li><li>• Maths Challenge (junior level)</li><li>• 98% attendance in Cycle 1</li><li>• 98% attendance in Cycle 2</li><li>• OSA Score 80+</li><li>• ASPIRE points +300</li><li>• Top 25 Cycle 1</li><li>• Top 25 Cycle 2</li><li>• Subject Award</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Litter Pick (6 times)</li><li>• Attend Community Action Day</li><li>• Humanitarian Aid day stall</li><li>• Volunteer at school event</li><li>• Lead a School Tour</li><li>• On a Student Advisory Board</li><li>• Community Leader Award</li><li>• 70+ Empathy Points</li><li>• Speak at an assembly</li><li>• Recorded for the Broadcast</li><li>• Questionnaire completion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 70+ Participation Points</li><li>• Cheering on OSA at a sporting event</li><li>• Attend a Trip</li><li>• Attend Extra Curricular club 6+</li><li>• Attend Society Day</li><li>• Complete Sports Leaders Award</li><li>• Complete Duke of Edinburgh</li><li>• Compete for your School</li><li>• Attend 6 House Competitions</li><li>• Timi Champion</li><li>• Write for the INSPIRE Paper</li></ul>

# ATTENDANCE



## GOOD ATTENDANCE SUPPORTS ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- **There is a strong and significant relationship between a student's grades and their attendance – this begins on a student's first day in Year 7.**
- **By keeping attendance above 98%, students will be demonstrating the professional standards that they will be held to in the world of work.**
- **We want all students to access the whole curriculum. Within a knowledge-centered curriculum, subjects are taught at gradually increasing levels of complexity leading to deeper knowledge and understanding. Students who are absent from lessons are losing the opportunity to gain essential knowledge needed to progress to the next stage of study.**

## REPORTING ABSENCE (including Illness, Late Arrivals and Absences)

- Please inform us daily for any absences.
- Please do not report any absences through the admin email or Reception or your tutor.
- The best way to report an absence for your child is via the My Child At School App (MCAS).(<https://www.mychildatschool.com/MCAS/MCSParentLogin>).
- MCAS will enable you to report your child's absence, future appointments, upload medical documentation and receive an acknowledgement from school, via your App or logging on to the MCAS website.
- You can also leave a message on the absence line 01865 428200 (option 1)
- If your child is absent from school and we have not received any communication then we will endeavour to contact you. If we are unable to make contact with you by the third day of absence we may choose to conduct a home visit. If this is unsuccessful we are duty bound to contact social services and the police of a child being missing from education.
- Good communication between home and school prevents unnecessary worry and work for all of us.

# ATTENDANCE



## **Oxford Spires Academy will:**

- Telephone or email parents/carers on the first day of absence by 9:30am if we have not heard from about the absence. This is because we have a duty to ensure any child's safety and whereabouts are known.
- A generic alert is sent to parents if the student is absent from school without communication from parents/carers. This is sent at 9:15am.
- If we are not able to make contact our home school link worker will visit the student at home.
- We will invite parents/carers to discuss unreported absence with our pastoral team if unauthorised absences persist.
- We may refer the matter to the local authority if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

## **What a parent/carer should expect if a students attendance falls below 95%?**

- If a students attendance drops below 95% we will alert parents/carers and send a letter to provide them with further pathways of support and next steps.
- At this stage we will begin monitoring a students attendance on a weekly basis and if this does not improve offer a meeting to discuss what further support can be offered. In the meeting we will agree an Attendance Contract between home and school.
- Based on the pattern of absence over a period of time, Oxford Spires reserves the right to stop authorising sickness absence. This change will always be communicated with families in writing in advance and we will always encourage a meeting to discuss our concerns and agree a plan to move forward.
- If a students attendance does not improve, we will ask parents/carers to attend an Attendance Contract meeting. This will be led by the pastoral or attendance team.
- We will discuss what support is needed to ensure attendance improves and agree a plan moving forward. We will then monitor the students attendance for an agreed period of time.
- Failure to improve will result in escalation and referral to Oxfordshire County Council.



# HOMEWORK & ASSESSMENT



Homework completion is hugely important to reinforce content being taught in lessons and help students with retaining the knowledge. Homework set will focus on pupils reviewing and revisiting taught content from lessons. This will normally be in the form of a knowledge retrieval quiz.

- Homework club runs everyday after school in the library.
- All homework is set via the My Child At School (MCAS) app.

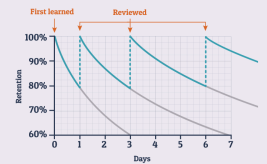
## THE FORGETTING CURVE

The Forgetting Curve shows how learned information slips out of our memories over time – unless we take action to keep it there.

The steepest drop in memory happens quickly after learning, so it's important students revisit information they have learned sooner rather than later. After that, regular reviews will help to reinforce it.

Doing this will help to reinforce learning and improve the power of recall, so that students can remember what has been learned in the long term.

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



## ONLINE STUDENT PLATFORMS

Students will work across a variety of platforms. We review these annually to make sure we are utilising the very best technological advances. Many of our platforms use AI to personalise the experience and provide real time feedback to students, teachers, parents and carers. Students also have a page dedicated to recording their logins and email accounts in their Scholar's Guides.

## ASSESSMENT

We will assess students on the taught curriculum in week 10 every cycle to measure how well our students are learning the taught curriculum.

- All pupils in Year 7-10 and 12 will have three assessments across the academic year.
- Year 11 and 13 will have two formal mock periods with additional subject assessments based on the GCSE/BTEC course structure.

*Schools are places of learning and achievement. We measure our success by our students' success. In an ever-growing complex world, our children need the qualifications, skills and tenacity to lead happy and successful lives.*

# HABITS FOR SUCCESS



Staff at Oxford Spires are committed to supporting and teaching students:

- The habits that will help them become successful learners.
- The behaviours that will enable them to thrive as exceptional members of society.

It is because we believe in the potential of our students that we explicitly share and model these habits and behaviours with them to ensure they develop into successful young adults.

- We want our academy to be a place where every individual is treated with respect.
- Our expectations will never be 'strict' or 'unreasonable', we have high expectations because we truly want to give all students every advantage in life.

## SANCTIONS AND ESCALATION

- Student equipment and uniform will be checked at the start of every day.
- Students will always be given reminders and warnings to make positive decisions or correct behaviours before a sanction is given in line with the academy behaviour policy.
- Jewellery that does not meet the uniform guide will be confiscated if visible in the academy and can be collected seven days later from Student Services. Parents/carers are welcome to come and collect confiscated items at any time before 4pm from Student Services.
- Non school uniform items like hoodies and sports jackets are not part of the school uniform and will be confiscated if worn in the academy.

## RESTORATIVES & DETENTIONS

- Students can be referred for a restorative conversation with a specific teacher at the end of each day. These last approx 20min and are held in the canteen.
- Students who miss a restorative detention twice a week receive a 2 hour SLT detention on a Wednesday.
- Students who collect more than 15 negative points in a week receive a one hour behaviour intervention on a Monday after school.
- If students are late to school they are required to attend a detention with their pastoral leader at break time or afterschool.

*In creating successful students it is crucial we instill excellent habits such as punctuality and preparedness. These may seem simple but are the corner stone to becoming successful in future careers. Getting it right at the start of the day enables all our students the disruption free learning they deserve.*



# THE OSA WAY

Remember we are always.....

## Responsible

Attending restoratives with teachers

For our own learning

For being kind and respectful towards every member of our community

## Engaged

In the lesson

In the House system

Working towards school Honours

## Ready

In uniform

With equipment

Distraction free

# SMARTPHONE FREE



The Research – Why This Matters

This policy is rooted in growing evidence. A few key findings from the Smartphone Free Rating network and Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*:

- Smartphone use is linked to a 50% rise in anxiety and depression in teens since 2010.
- Classroom focus drops significantly when phones are even present — let alone used.
- Social media fuels social comparison, cyberbullying, and disrupted sleep.
- Schools that have introduced strict smartphone policies report better attendance, improved behaviour, and higher academic outcomes.



## SMARTPHONE FREE SCHOOL



### Smartphone

If a smartphone is seen or heard during the school day it:

- **Will** be confiscated
- Held securely at **Reception**
- Need to be collected only by a **parent or carer**
- R5 sanction issued. **(-5 points)**



### Basic Phone

If a basic phone is seen or heard during the day it:

- **Will** be confiscated
- Held securely at **Student Services**
- Can be collected by **student** at the end of the day.

Refusal to hand over a smartphone will trigger escalation to a member of SLT, and non-compliance will lead to suspension.

**Help us keep our school calm,  
focused, and phone-free.**

# EQUIPMENT & UNIFORM



Pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform at all times (other than specified non-school uniform days or agreed reasonable adjustment). Failure to comply with the Uniform Policy will result in sanctions as indicated in the School Behaviour Policy.

Students with missing uniform or equipment should report to Student Services before 8:30am where they will be supported to correct their uniform or allowed to borrow equipment without any sanction. We respect the ownership the student has taken to address their uniform or equipment.

## KEY REMINDERS

- A reminder of equipment students are expected to bring to school can be found in students Scholar's Guide.
- Students must only wear one earring per ear, and these must be either a plain gold or silver stud.
- Students are not to wear rings or necklaces to school.
- Nail varnish, acrylic nails and gel nails are not permitted.
- In addition, students are not allowed to wear false eyelashes.
- Shoes or trainers must be plain black and should be unbranded.
- Students have access to the Student Services from 8:10am if they need to borrow a piece of uniform or equipment.
- If students arrive to tutor time in the incorrect uniform or with missing equipment, they will be supported to correct the uniform or equipment and a sanction will be issued.
- Equipment and uniform will be checked every morning in tutor time.
- Full details of our Uniform Policy can be found on our school website.

*All students will be provided with an OSA learning kit at the start of the academic year. This includes a reading ruler, mini whiteboard, mini whiteboard pen and eraser. Students will also be given a folder to carry their learning equipment and Scholar's Guide. Students will need this equipment and their Scholar's Guide every lesson. We ask for a voluntary contribution of £3 for this learning pack, paid via ParentPay.*