

## School Newsletter | 9th February 2024

### Welcome

Welcome to our last newsletter of this half term. Although it has been short, over the past 5 weeks there has been so much happening at OSCA. We look forward to continuing our progression when we return to school on Monday 19th February.

### Good News

#### Student Fundraising

For our fundraising project to get OSCA a new pitch, we have events in the works that will hopefully bring us closer to the £10,000 target. Our students have been amazing with coming up with ideas, but we want to give a special shout out to Thomas in Year 10. Thomas has taken it upon himself to get involved with the project by creating his own fundraising project to help towards getting our new pitch. Thomas did this by creating a football card, where people had to pay £2 to take part. This has proved to be a great success as by doing this, Thomas has raised £50 with all proceeds going towards our fundraising project. We want to say a huge well done to Thomas, and a big thank you from us.

If you think there is anything you can do to help support our fundraising project then please get in touch using the email address below. This could be anything from fundraising event ideas, donations, or any contacts you may have who could help us further. Once again, thank you to those who have been so supportive of our mission so far. Let's Get OSCA a New Pitch!

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### Measles

There are currently increasing numbers of measles cases in England. Vaccination UK have been instructed by NHSE to administer the MMR vaccination to all school aged children who are outstanding one or both doses. The MMR would have been given at aged 1, and the 2nd dose at 3 years 4 months. If your child is outstanding one or both doses, please call 0121 592 1110 to make an appointment. This will be at an alternative venue and not at school.

### Attendance

1st	Year 7
2nd	Year 9
3rd	Year 8

High attendance is vital to ensure that students reach their maximum potential while at school. Having a couple of days off here and there may not seem like it will have much of an impact, but by having just 6-10 days off a year, it can drop the chances of achieving those higher grades by 10%. This equates to over 50 hours of learning lost per year. Congratulations to Year 7 who achieved the highest attendance last week!

### Lost Property

Please ensure students are collecting any lost property. We have a number of items currently awaiting collection. Lost property is located next to the reflection room in A block.

### Social Media

Don't forget to follow us on social media, where you can find any news on school activities as well as updates about recent events.



@OSCATweets



Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy

Dear Parent/ Carer

Thank you for your support this half term. It may have been short but, again, we seem to have done an awful lot.

Throughout these five weeks, in response to staff, student and parent voice, our theme has been 'working with dignity'. Mr Ahmed has led really positive year group assemblies whilst teaching staff, at the same time, have discussed the same messages as adults. Our basic premise is that everyone in our community has value; a value that that cannot be lost or taken away but can be enhanced. On one level this may mean an adult takes the time to say good morning and welcome a student to school before asking for a shirt to be tucked in or a blazer put on. It can also mean that a student takes a pride in their appearance or holds a door open for others. Dignity reward cards were issued to students and I know that I have already signed a fair few!

Although it has been quite short, we have packed a lot of professional development into this half term. We started the new year with sessions on safeguarding, the behaviour curriculum, and a particular focus on quality first teaching interventions for Year 11 classes. We are lucky to have David Didau, OAT National Lead for English and much respected educationalist, as a governor. David has led two really thorough sessions for staff on reading strategies such as decoding and Lexonics. I'm not sure if parents are told what professional development is taking place in other schools but for me, it is hugely important that we communicate how we are improving our school through high quality support for the adults.

I host a weekly 'surgery' for parents and have done so since September. Many of the things that we are changing have come out of these conversations and I am very grateful for them. As a parent I share some of your frustrations about communication. In response, I believe that pastoral email addresses are available on our website and we are soon to publish a 'what to do if...' flowchart. These informal parent voice meetings are really important for me to understand what we do well and what we can do better. There is no lack of desire to continue to improve our school.

Our academy uniform has not changed, and expectations remain the same. If a student arrives without the correct uniform we will see if we can loan out an item or perhaps, contact home to see if it can be brought to school. If this isn't possible the student is expected to go the Hall at social time; some schools insist that the student is not in lessons, we do not. Students with incorrect uniform are brought down for lunch after other year groups. We recently shared a photo of the canteen at the end of lunch to show parents the array of food that is still available at the end of lunch. All students have access to food.

Thank you for your support this half term, it is not taken for granted and, whilst I may be looking forward to a break, I am also eager to continue our work next half term.

Adian Price  
Principal



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about PERSUASIVE DESIGN ONLINE

'Persuasive design' refers to the techniques that companies employ to influence our thoughts and behaviours when we're on the internet. These approaches can be spotted on websites, in apps and even as part of some video games. Persuasive design means that this content has been deliberately presented in a way that's intended to encourage you to spend your time or money (or both). These methods often prove highly effective at keeping people engaged and invested for longer than we might expect.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### POTENTIAL ADDICTION

In the digital world, persuasive design can make certain activities more addictive and harder to walk away from: some people may begin to feel anxious or irritated without access to their device or their favourite app, for example. It can also often leave users feeling isolated, as – if they spend most of their time on social media – they may start to find it difficult to talk to other people in real life.

### MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Scrolling online or gaming without regular breaks is proven to be harmful to our mental health. The constant bombardment of news stories (many of them negative), images and influencers' posts can create sensations of unease, uncertainty and FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people can get so immersed in this environment that they become less likely to spot misleading posts.

### PROLONGED SCROLLING

Social media can draw any of us – regardless of age – into a continuous pattern of refreshing our screen, following posts and links down rabbit holes or reading countless comments made by others. This aimless scrolling can eat up time which could have been spent on more productive activities. It could also lead younger users into areas of the online world which aren't age appropriate.

# KEEP SCROLLING

### SENSORY OVERLOAD

Repetitively scrolling, clicking on links or playing games can create an unending stream of new information and visual stimuli. Put it this way: social media isn't exactly renowned as a carefree, chilled-out environment. Such overstimulation can become too much for young people to handle, resulting in sensory overload and causing them to feel stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted.

### COSTLY ADDITIONS

Video games sometimes display offers for downloadable content or loot boxes which can be bought with real money. While these 'microtransactions' temptingly promise to improve a player's gaming experience, most of the time they are money sinks. Young people in particular, excited by the chance of enhancing their game, could spend quite a sizeable sum very quickly indeed.

### PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hours spent sitting and scrolling means far less time moving around and getting exercise: hardly ideal for a young person's physical health. Additionally, prolonged exposure to the light given off by a phone's screen can lead to eye fatigue and discomfort, especially if viewing it in the dark. Extended phone use before bed can also impact on sleep quality, affecting mood and energy levels over the following days.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### ESTABLISH LIMITS

Talk to your child about setting some time limits on how long they can use their phone, tablet or console in the evenings or at weekends – or perhaps how often they can go on a specific app, game or website. You could also decide to involve the whole family in creating this shared screen time agreement, making things fair (and healthier) for everyone.

### NIX NOTIFICATIONS

Stop knee-jerk responses at the source by turning off push notifications and alerts. Whether it's a gaming notification or a social media update, these not-so-gentle reminders are designed to catch our attention and lure us back to our device. Switching them off – or even deleting any particularly intrusive apps – can help prevent your child from being reeled back into the online world.

### ENCOURAGE MINDFULNESS

Acknowledging any addiction is key in overcoming it – and compulsive scrolling is no different. If anything mentioned in this guide sounds familiar, it could help to have an honest, open chat with your child about how much time they spend online. Get them to think about how often they scroll through social media aimlessly or habitually open it up whenever they have a spare moment.

### MAKE A CHECKLIST

Considering a list of relevant questions can be an effective way of helping children figure out why they're scrolling on certain sites or consuming particular pieces of content. A checklist can prompt young people to ask themselves if they're learning anything or benefiting from this activity – or if they're wasting their time. Taking a step back can sometimes help us to see things more clearly.

## Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



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