

School Newsletter | 7th July 2023

This week we have seen our wonderful students and staff bring together months of hard work to deliver 'Night at the Musicals'. Well done to everyone involved. We welcomed our new year 7s to the academy for our induction day and evening on Thursday 6th July. They thoroughly enjoyed meeting staff and making new friends. They were able to watch the fantastic production from our students who were involved in the PAPA production of 'Night at the Musicals'. We cannot wait to welcome them back at OSCA in September. Next week students in years 9 and 10 will be issued with their brand-new graduation ties for upper school. We are asking students/parents to donate their existing ties so that we can use them for students in KS3. Have a lovely weekend.

Good News

Year 7 students took part in a creative arts performance as part of their Character Development curriculum. Within our local community of Oldbury, there is an increase in the prevalence of diabetes. This is why our students wanted to raise awareness of Healthy Eating through the Diabetes Project. The project aimed to highlight the dangers of type 2 diabetes through art workshops and culminated in a shadow-puppet show teaching their new gained knowledge to other students across the Academy and raising awareness of Healthy Eating at the same time!



Attendance

1st	Year 7
2nd	Year 8
3rd	Year 9
4th	Year 10

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 for the second time running!

Upcoming Events

Summer Awards Afternoon: Tuesday 11th July

Next week, we will be celebrating our annual summer awards afternoon. The event is a wonderful display of achievements made by the students, where they will be awarded for their accomplishments.

Enrichment Week: Wednesday 19th-Friday 21st July

Over enrichment week, students will be able to enjoy some fun activities as a reward for their hard work. There will be lots going on, including a trip to Drayton Manor and our Sports Fest event.

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

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

AMINO



PETS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Amino is a social media platform offering a large group of subcommunities under one digital 'roof'; it was envisaged as the online version of a convention, where fans gather to celebrate a shared interest like comic books or sci-fi, for example. While many such platforms are harmless spaces for devotees of a certain TV show or video game to congregate, there are still some aspects that trusted adults should be aware of. With a focus on sharing user-generated content, the idea of Amino is for users to communicate with like-minded individuals - but even that can create plenty of hazards.

MUSIC

MODERATION GAPS

Amino has a 12+ classification in the App Store and a 'Teen' rating on Google Play. However, certain communities on the platform have little to no moderation in place - increasing the potential for more adult-themed content to reach young users. It's also possible to create an account without proof of age, raising the possibility of even younger children finding their way onto the platform.

COMICS & COSPLAY

MEMBERSHIP COSTS

Amino+ is a premium membership for the platform, offering a bevy of customisation options such as stickers, 'moods' to display and an exclusive profile badge. Users can also purchase one-off cosmetic items including different styles of chat bubble or profile frames. If your child has payment methods available via their device, they could potentially make these in-app purchases without you realising.

UNSAFE CONTENT

The central concept behind Amino is for users to share content, then make and receive comments on these uploads. The level of anonymity that the platform offers (someone's true identity can be completely obscured behind their username, for instance) means that it would be extremely difficult to stop suggestive or outright predatory comments and messages being sent to young people.

REPEATED USAGE

As a social media app, Amino is focused on keeping its communities engaged and coming back for more. Part of this approach is encouraging people to build up 'streaks', as users are awarded 'reputation points' for logging in regularly. This type of mechanism, of course, always carries the risk of young people feeling a compulsion to repeatedly check in with the app, further increasing their screen time.

INAPPROPRIATE IMAGES

Like most social media, Amino offers easy sharing of images. Its community guidelines state that any suggestive photos of under-18s will be removed immediately, but of course this doesn't prevent inappropriate pictures being seen by a young person. Not all of Amino's communities are rigorously moderated, so there's a chance that some unsuitable images could temporarily evade detection.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT IT

If your child is old enough and chooses to download and use Amino, it's probably wise to remind them of some online safety basics - such as how not everyone in the digital world is who they claim to be, for example, or not to give out personal information online. It might also be a good idea to go into the app's settings and disable incoming chat requests from users that your child doesn't know.

MEMBERSHIP MEDIATION

If your child asks for an Amino+ membership but you're not entirely comfortable with that, be prepared to explain your decision in depth. Young people's sense of injustice can naturally become inflamed when their friends have things that they don't. Parents of older teens, meanwhile, might actually decide to agree to the membership request but continue to monitor their child's activity on the app.

STAY UPDATED

Ensure that your child knows to report any upsetting or worrying online content they might see to you. As much as possible, try to stay aware of which communities they're joining on Amino. Most of these areas are well moderated and full of innocent conversation about common interests, but on any platform of this breadth, there's always the potential for chats to veer off into potentially harmful places.

MONITOR SCREEN TIME

If you haven't already, you might want to consider setting up controls such as Family Sharing (on iOS devices) or Family Link (on Android) so, from your own device, you can keep an eye on how much screen time your child is having - and what apps they're spending it on. This can be extremely useful with regard to platforms such as Amino, which can be quite addictive and reward repeated use.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRacon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent who understands the value of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



NOS National Online Safety® #WakeUpWednesday