



29th September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

On Thursday 24th September 2026 we hosted our Welcome to GCSE Evening for our Year 10s. It was great that so many of you and your children joined us. We understand that not everyone was able to attend, so this letter serves as a summary of the key messages we covered.

Why is Year 10 important?

Everything your child does from now on is important and counts towards their final GCSEs. GCSE specifications not only require two years of delivery, but in some subjects (such as BTECs), they are currently doing assessments such as PSAs. These types of assessments cannot be completed at home and must be completed in exam conditions, so it is vital that they are in school. This is especially important as each grade counts – their grades are totaled for a point score, which is used for their future college applications.

How can my child be successful?

- **PSA/Coursework Subjects** – if your child is doing any subjects that are coursework based, e.g. Health and Social, Dance, Art, then they are completing work in their lessons that will count towards their final grades. It is the same as completing the final exam. This work can only be completed under supervised conditions at school, so it is imperative that they are in school for it. Everything they do will count towards their final grade, which they will receive in August 2028.
- **Attendance** – evidence continues to show that students with better school attendance achieve better outcomes. This is due to the expert support on offer within the academy, such as their subject teachers and our pastoral team. What really makes the difference is when students have at least 95% attendance. They always need to be in school, even if they are a little under the weather. Just let us know, and we will support them.
- **Home Learning** – as a GCSE student, your child has access to two online home learning platforms: Sparx (Maths) and Tassomai (English, Science, History, Geography and MFL). These are **in addition to** any home learning set in subject areas. Sparx is always due on a Wednesday, and Tassomai is always due by a Sunday – these deadlines are in student planners. Evidence shows us that where the completion rate was higher among the Class of 2026, their grades were higher. Students need to take responsibility by writing down home learning deadlines and meeting these.
- **Homework Club** – whilst Period 6 is generally on offer for our Year 11 students, Year 10s are encouraged to begin attending Homework Club voluntarily. This is every Tuesday and Thursday from 3.10pm until 4.10pm, offering students a quiet place to study and access computers in the library. It would be great to see students getting into the right habits early. They will earn reward stamps in their planner every time they attend.
- **Revision Techniques** – as GCSE subjects take two years to deliver, it is important that students take responsibility and begin revising early. Evidence suggests that this is the most effective form of revision. We recommend using the Denes Desirables: mind dumps, quizzing, dual coding, flashcards and spaced practice.

- **Work Experience** – Work experience is taking place during w/c **28th June 2027 to 2nd July 2027**. Students who attended the RAC evening received a **booklet** which details a step-by-step guide on how to upload work experience placement/documentations. Please let us know if your child has not yet received one. We are aiming for students to secure their placement by **December 2026**.

Careers Support & College Open Events

We know that stepping into GCSE can feel overwhelming, especially when students begin planning for when they leave ODA. However, we have skilled careers support in the academy, Mrs Richings and Mrs Gibbons, who will always be happy to help. Year 10 students are encouraged to begin attending college open events. Here are the events that come up locally:

- **Lowestoft 6th Form College** – Saturday 3rd October 2026, Wednesday 11th November 2026.
- **East Coast College (Lowestoft Campus)** - Saturday 3rd October 2026, Wednesday 11th November 2026.
- **East Coast College (Great Yarmouth Campus)** - Saturday 10th October 2026, Thursday 19th November 2026.
- **East Norfolk Sixth Form College (Gorleston)** - Thursday 8th October 2025

Of course, there are more post 16 education providers, and details can be found on the careers guidance page of our website [here](#).

Useful Links

[Year 10 Raising Achievement Booklet 2026](#)

[Student Launchpad - ODA Student Intranet](#)

[Tassomai](#)

[Sparx Maths](#)

[Kooth - Exam Stress](#)

If you have any questions or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are looking forward to working together to ensure success for your child as our Class of 2028!

Yours Sincerely,



Miss Smith-Howell

Head of Year 10



Miss Beales

Assistant Principal – Raising Achievement & Attendance