

Academy 21

Parent & Carer Information Pack

All you need to know about
Academy21, our provision, and
how we will support your child.



Making a difference, together.

Academy21 is the UK's leading online alternative provision specialist.

Since 2011, we've partnered with schools and local authorities nationwide to provide high-quality, flexible education for students who need a different approach to learning. Combining proven pedagogy and expert teaching with a supportive, innovative learning environment, our mission is to get every child engaged and succeeding — ready for whatever their bright future holds.

Welcome statement from Executive Head

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Academy21 and for considering our alternative provision for your child.

I am pleased to share with you more about the support we provide in partnership with schools and local authorities.

You are in good company. We have been teaching online for nearly two decades, and thousands of parents and carers see their children flourish with Academy21 each year.

No matter the reason or how long a student is with us, everyone gets the full support of our teachers and the opportunity to thrive. As someone who has been a Headteacher across both Primary and Secondary age ranges for over ten years, I've seen the impact that passionate and skilled teachers can have.

Our teachers care, they are also, experienced and fully qualified. They have taught in UK schools and are fully trained in how to teach online to engage young people. We are a provision with inclusion at its heart.

We are the first online alternative provision to be accredited by the Department for Education, and everything we do is designed to provide the very best education experience — from our teaching to our flexible environment.

Throughout their time at Academy21, your child will be treated as an individual and challenged to be the best version of themselves.

We will support them to build relationships with our teachers and enjoy their learning. Our courses are all based on the national curriculum and are designed to promote as much engagement and interaction as possible.

Through our combination of expert teachers, live lessons and a supportive environment, we help children to connect with their subjects and build confidence. We also support reintegration back to school or to move into other education options, whenever that is the best path for the individual pupil.

If you have any questions after reading this pack, please do speak with your child's school or your local authority.



Amy Husband
Executive Head of Academy21

"I want to thank you all so much for all the help you have given me since starting online school.

I was really struggling with my mental health and was certain I wasn't going to do my GCSEs this year. However, you all made me look forward to each of your lessons as you were extremely kind and created a comfortable atmosphere, I was able to learn in. I didn't feel pushed or overwhelmed with work like I did in mainstream, instead I felt motivated and happy to do well. Thanks to you I'm able to complete my GCSEs. Thank you ever so much."

Olivia
Year 11 student

What is Academy 21?

Since 2011, Academy21 has supported thousands of students across the UK to reconnect with their education through:

- Live, interactive lessons in virtual classrooms
- 40-minute classes on a flexible timetable
- Fully qualified, experienced teachers
- Small class sizes of 15 students
- Extra support for learning and wellbeing

Our team is dedicated to providing high-quality, flexible learning for every child we work with. Academy21 is accredited by the Department for Education – [read our Ofsted report here](#).

Online alternative provision

Online learning offers a different path for pupils who may need some time away from a traditional classroom environment for a range of reasons.

The right support for your child

At Academy21, we adapt our provision to your child's needs. We offer flexible timetables, a wide range of national curriculum subjects, and lots of support along the way.

Working together with you

We believe in the power of partnership. That's why we work closely with schools, and students to get the best outcomes for each young person.

Who do we support?

We support students across the country in partnership with their schools, local authorities, or specialist provision units.

Academy21 is fully inclusive, working with young people who face many different challenges. Some pupils may have special educational needs (SEN) that make the classroom too overwhelming, while others may be working through physical or mental health difficulties.

Our flexible approach means we can provide the right support for your child's unique journey and goals — whether that's short-term help to get back into school or a longer-term solution for ongoing health or educational needs.

All our teachers have experience supporting students with a range of different needs, and they know exactly how to make online learning accessible, engaging, and effective.

With a track record of success helping numerous families, we're committed to making sure your child reaches their full potential, no matter their starting point.

Who are our teachers?

Our fully qualified teachers are the heart and foundation of your child's learning journey, bringing understanding and expertise to every lesson.

At Academy21, our teachers use traditional classroom teaching methods and online tools to make each lesson engaging and effective. Adapting teaching to your child's needs, they also work to build each student's academic skills, personal confidence, and enthusiasm for school.

Every one of our teachers is fully qualified and DBS checked, with lots of experience across mainstream schools and SEND settings. Our teachers are specially trained in online education, taking part in regular professional development to improve their knowledge.

Your child will meet their teachers on their first day at Academy21, and they'll be with your child for unwavering support throughout their time with us.

You'll find many of our teachers, including their intro videos, on our ['Meet the Team' website page](#).

"Thank you so much for my time at Academy21.

It is always hard for me to get up on mornings, but I always look forward to my English lessons because of how polite and welcoming my teacher is. She is not only a great teacher, but she is great at listening and an amazing person to talk to. She always offers advice and makes sure if we need help, we can always ask her."

Erron
Student

What will your child learn?

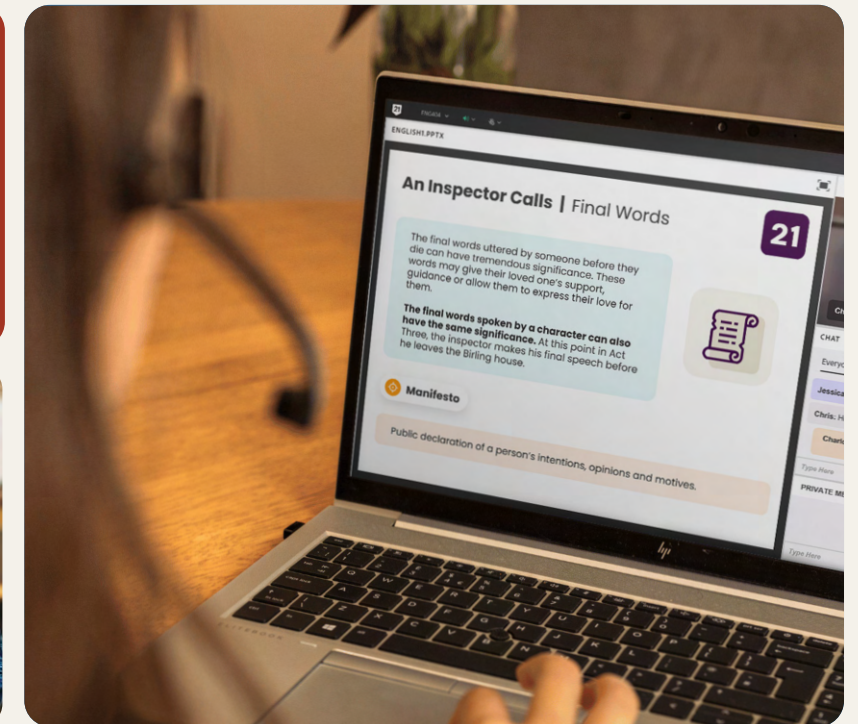
At Academy21, your child will follow an engaging learning programme in line with the national curriculum.

Every young person referred to us gets their own personalised timetable to fit their needs and aims. Whether your child has missed some of their learning, needs to prepare for exams, or build their confidence for future studies, Academy21 provides:

- Live, interactive lessons with our expert teachers
- Small classes working at a similar ability
- 24/7 access to our lesson library for catch-up
- Engaging homework to build understanding
- Lots of resources to boost learning and progress

97%

of students say their Academy21 teachers support and encourage them in their learning



Key Stage 3: Year 7–9

40-minute lessons | 1 lesson per day in each subject | Monday to Thursday*

Available at two levels, our Key Stage 3 Skillbuilder curriculum gets students reengaged with their learning and builds strong foundations for your child's future GCSE studies.

*May have Friday sessions if the school has commissioned them

Key Stage 4: Year 10–11

40-minute lessons | 1 lesson per day in each subject | Monday to Thursday*

At Key Stage 4, we offer GCSE courses that can be studied over one or two years, functional skills courses, and optional PSHE classes — all designed to help your child achieve their best and prepare for their next steps.

What to expect on the first day

When your school or local authority registers your child with Academy21, the first step will be to give your child their login details.

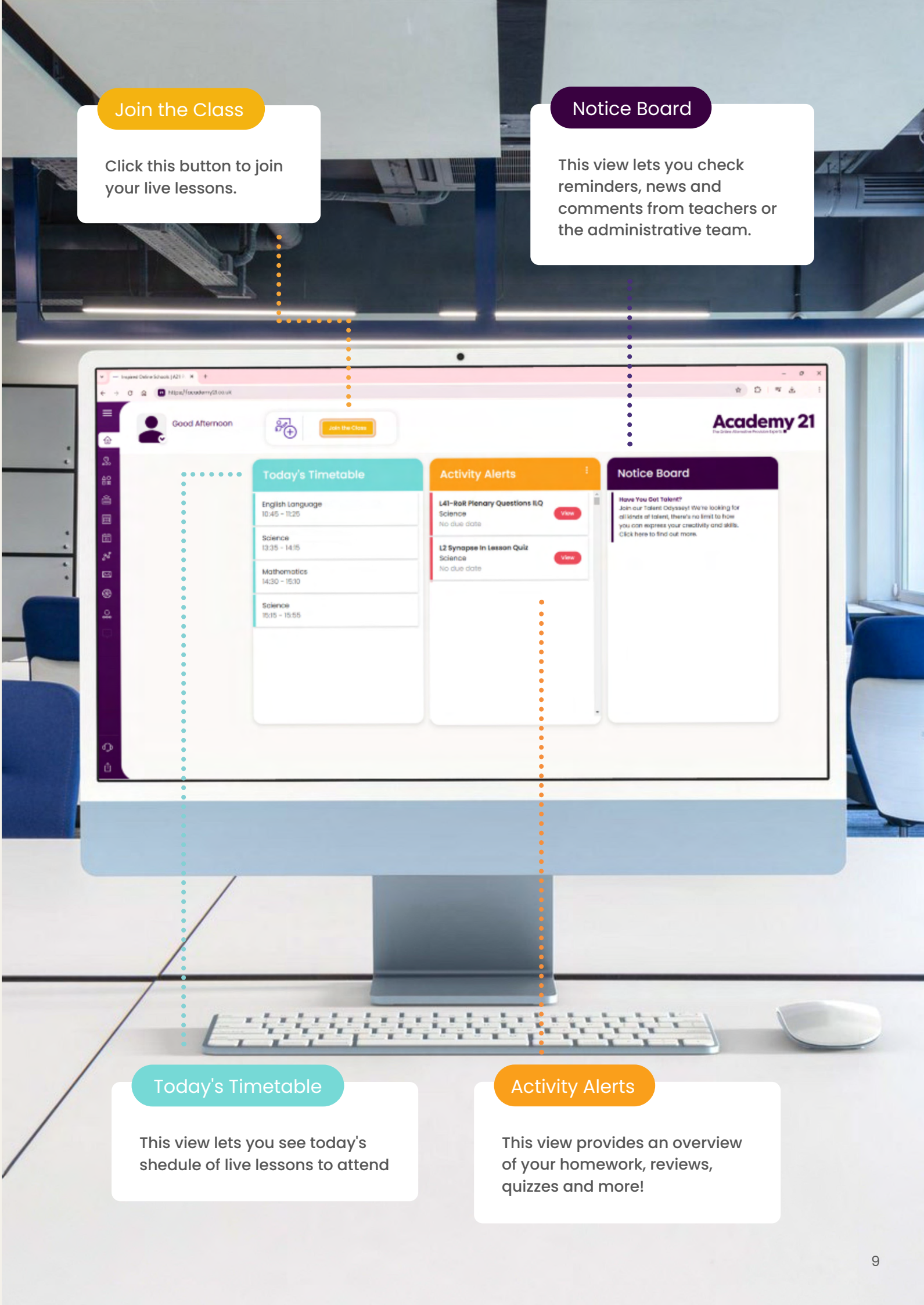
These will be an Academy21 email address and temporary password. These will come directly from the organisation that has booked the lessons with us.

Try to use a desktop computer or laptop if possible. When your child logs in for the first time using the details provided, they will be asked to set up their own password.

When they log in, the first thing they will see is their home screen. It contains details of their timetable, links to support and links to join their classes. The classroom links will only work when there is a class to join.

There will be lots of help available to your child. For example, there is an induction video that will show them all the features of the platform which they can view any time. We also run a live induction class twice a week.

We recommend everyone attends the induction class once, to help them settle in and know what to expect.



Join the Class

Click this button to join your live lessons.

Notice Board

This view lets you check reminders, news and comments from teachers or the administrative team.

Today's Timetable

English Language
10:45 - 11:25
Science
13:35 - 14:15
Mathematics
14:30 - 15:10
Science
15:15 - 15:55

Activity Alerts

L41-RoR Plenary Questions IIQ
Science
No due date
View
L2 Synapse in Lesson Quiz
Science
No due date
View

Notice Board

Have You Got Talent?

Join our Talent Odyssey! We're looking for all kinds of talent, there's no limit to how you can express your creativity and skills. Click here to find out more.

Today's Timetable

This view lets you see today's shedule of live lessons to attend

Activity Alerts

This view provides an overview of your homework, reviews, quizzes and more!

What do lessons look like?

The Academy21 virtual classroom is easy to use and designed for the best online learning experience.

Our main classroom window is an interactive whiteboard where students can interact directly with activities and use various tools as directed by their teacher. Surrounding the whiteboard, your child will find a range of 'pods' and tools for different ways of learning and communicating.

For example, students can message their teacher privately or share their thoughts with the wider class via the main chat pod. They don't need to have their camera on to engage, either, as they can raise their hand, react with emotions, and take part in polls, quizzes, and other immersive activities. All useful class materials and links are easily accessible.

"I've been struggling with my writing for a long while, but my teacher made me realise that it's okay to get things wrong and it doesn't always matter what other people have written and if they are better than me."

Lucy
Year 10, Student



Subject	Average Mark
Mathematics	78%
English Language	4 (6%)
Combined Science	0 (0%)
History	13 (12%)
PSHE	10 (17%)
ICT	4 (9%)

Subject	Average Mark	Issued	Answered	Marked
Mathematics	78%	3.45	3.15	3.33
English Language	4 (6%)	3.31	2.81	2.81
Combined Science	0 (0%)	3.06	2.64	2.91
History	13 (12%)	4.00	3.58	3.85
PSHE	10 (17%)	3.46	3.15	3.33
ICT	4 (9%)	3.31	2.81	2.81
Citizenship	11 (10%)	3.06	2.64	2.91
English Literature	10 (8%)	4.00	3.58	3.85

File pod

The file pod enables the teacher to provide useful files to download for a lesson or extra information.

Menu bar

The menu bar allows students to raise their hand, use a green tick to agree or a red cross to disagree. As well as icons indicating that they're laughing or applauding.

Draw

By selecting 'Draw', the students will see tools such as a writing pen and a highlighter for use on the interactive whiteboard. They can also circle areas of the board when asked.

Poll & web link pods

The poll is a quick poll which everyone can answer - only the teacher can see the individual responses. The web links pod is where a teacher can send students to a useful website.

Q&A

The Q&A pod is where a student and teacher can interact privately.

Chat pod

The chat pod is where students type in answers or questions for everyone to see.

Students require a headset and microphone to hear and speak with the group and their teacher.

Frequently asked questions

What does my child need to get started learning from home?

Your child can join Academy21 lessons from anywhere as long as they have access to a computer or laptop with an internet connection.

A headset and microphone are required to hear and speak in class — but students don't have to talk aloud if they're not yet comfortable. All communication is then recorded and saved for child protection purposes.

How do we access the school platform and lessons?

When your child joins us, they'll receive a dedicated username and password. This gives students secure access to all lessons and a personalised dashboard, where they can:

- View their timetable
- Watch recordings of missed lessons
- Submit completed activities

[Watch our portal video here.](#)

What should I do if my child needs to be absent?

You can report any illness or absence directly to your child's school or local authority who

comissioned the placement with us, who will then update your child's attendance on the Academy21 platform.

What should I do if there's a technical issue?

We provide live IT support to every student and mentor, available at any point during the school day. Just have your child head to the Support page in their portal and click 'Live Support' for help. Or, if they can't log in to the portal, they can also access live support from our website at academy21.co.uk/IT-support.

What should I do if I have questions or feedback?

You can raise any questions about your child's placement at Academy21 with your child's school or local authority who comissioned the placement with us. If your query needs escalating, every school and authority we work with has a dedicated customer service team they can get in touch with directly.

It is important we are able to speak to the comissioner of the placement to ensure communication is clear, but we are absolutely ready to receive feedback or queries from parents/carers via your child's school or authority. We welcome your views on your child's time with us.

How can you be involved as a parent or family member?

There are lots of ways you can help your child get the most out of Academy21.

At Academy21, your child will always have the support of, our teachers, and our support teams. As a parent, the additional support you can bring them will be invaluable in boosting their confidence and helping them transition back into the right educational path.

Encourage your child to join in

Active participation in lessons will boost your child's learning and understanding and help them develop more confidence in connecting with their teacher and classmates.

You can support your child's participation by:

- Encouraging them to use the classroom tools to ask questions and join discussions
- Talk to them after lessons to hear what they've learned
- Keep their school updated on any changes that might affect their learning

Create a great learning environment

A dedicated learning space can be a big help in getting your child feeling focused and positive, and the same goes for a solid daily routine.

Some of our top tips for a great learning setting include:

- Choosing a quiet space with minimal distractions
- Staying organised with all necessary equipment within reach
- Building regular breaks, physical activity, and rest into the day

Stay connected with school feedback

Keeping connected with your child's school or local authority who commissioned the placement. This is the best way to stay updated on their progress, celebrate their achievements, and provide the right support at home.

"Excellent lessons and made such an amazing difference in my daughter.

I just wanted to thank all Academy21 staff for the excellent lessons you have given my daughter since March this year. It has made an amazing difference...by helping her study again and be able to realise her potential."

Parent

Year 11 student

They can provide you with updates, reports and information on the programme they and you have set up for your child with Academy21. They can also make changes to this programme with us after any discussions with you.

We recommend that parents:

- Regularly check in with their designated contact for updates
- Read all progress reports sent home
- Use this information to set goals and offer encouragement

Support your child's online safety

As part of our commitment to safeguarding at Academy21, we teach your child about the risks of the internet and how to use the web safely and positively.

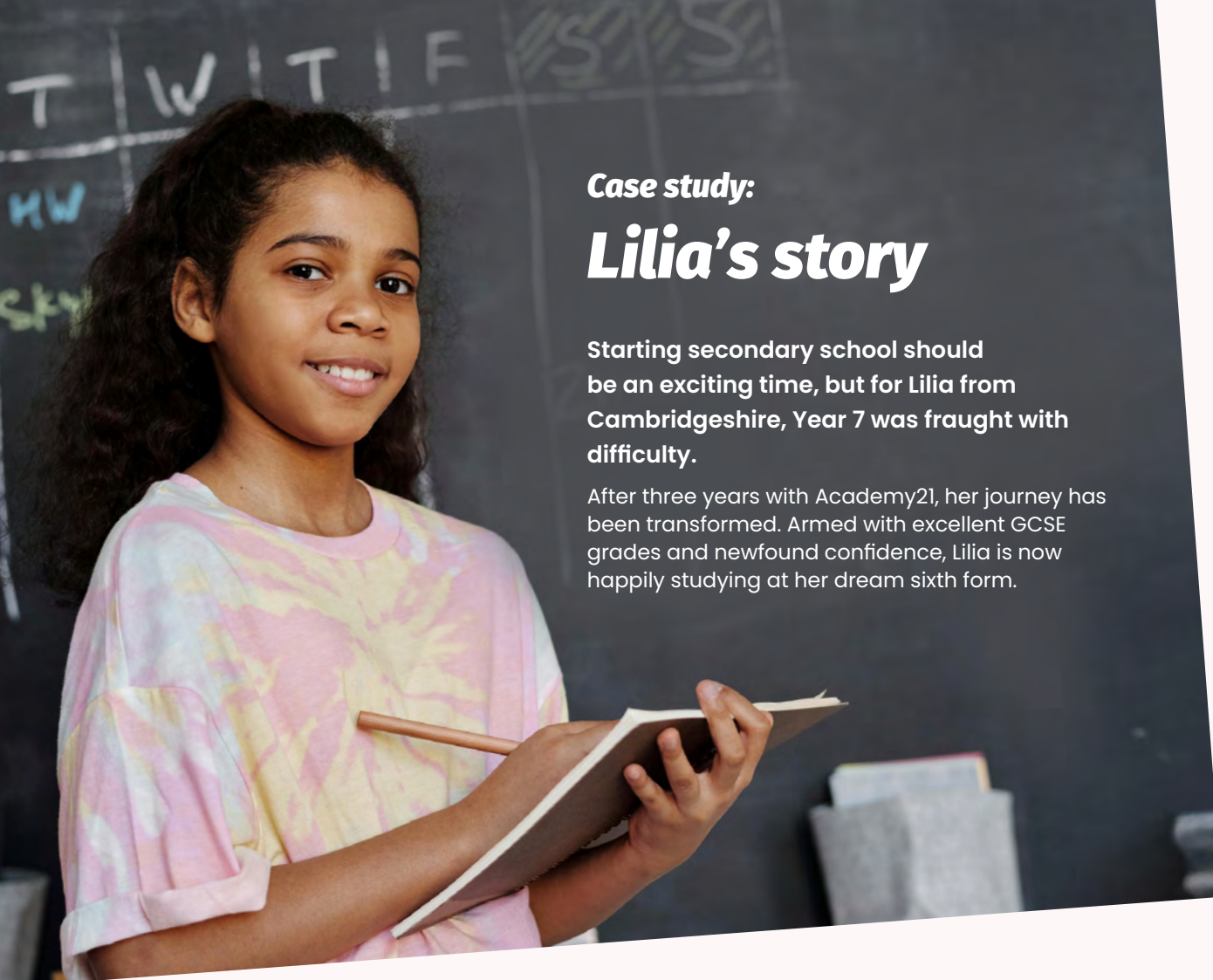
To support your child's safety online, you can also:

- Set clear rules about internet usage, including social media
- Use parental controls to block inappropriate websites
- Talk openly with your child about what they're doing online

You can also find more helpful information about internet safety from:

- [NSPCC](#)
- [Think UK Now](#)
- [Saferinternet](#)





Case study:

Lilia's story

Starting secondary school should be an exciting time, but for Lilia from Cambridgeshire, Year 7 was fraught with difficulty.

After three years with Academy21, her journey has been transformed. Armed with excellent GCSE grades and newfound confidence, Lilia is now happily studying at her dream sixth form.

Supportive teachers

Our fully qualified teachers (who have extensive experience in mainstream, SEN, and online education) know just how to create a sense of warmth that's crucial for getting students reengaged with their education, even when they're learning from across the country.

"We felt the teachers really got to know Lilia as an individual and she was able to talk to them confidently in return." – Coralie and Nigel, Lilia's parents

Practical subjects online

Lilia's mother admitted she had wondered how her daughter would tackle hands-on GCSEs like sciences remotely, but our innovative learning technologies mean students never miss out even when studying through a screen.

Lilia chose to study all three sciences at GCSE and was able to achieve high grades of 8, 8, and 7, even though she missed most of her early secondary school science education.

Working with Lilia's school

Throughout Lilia's journey, her school remained closely involved via a dedicated support guide. Working with schools helps us create the best learning plan for each student's needs and aims.

"I had a teacher assistant I could speak to, and we would check up every couple of weeks just to make sure everything was going how I wanted it to." – Lilia

Lilia's success story

Ultimately, in most cases, our goal is to help students go back to mainstream school with the self-assurance and skills needed to thrive.

That was the case for Lilia too, and after three years with us at Academy21, she was able to transition back to in-person learning in time for sixth form.

On top of that, she left Academy21 armed with wonderful GCSE results: five 8s and two 7s.

"We are very grateful to Academy21 for their excellent organisation, teaching, and support." – Coralie and Nigel, Lilia's parents

Recalling when she first enrolled with Academy21, Lilia told us she had "nervous, unsure state having been out of education for a year." However, she went on to say, "within a short time frame, I felt both the environment in the online classes and the workload kept me engaged and feeling significantly less under pressure than before; I think this is why I resonated so well with online schooling."

Now, she's taking her future into her own hands and blazing a path to her dream of studying history at university — and we have no doubt she'll succeed.

Lilia's struggles in school

Throughout Year 7, Lilia unfortunately suffered from health difficulties that led to frequent hospital visits. By Year 8, she had already missed so much of her education that returning to school felt overwhelming.

"It was getting harder and harder to come back into a classroom environment." – Lilia

How Academy21 helped

When Lilia's anxiety reached its peak in Year 9, her family began looking into alternative ways to learn. That's when they found Academy21.

Working together with Lilia, her family, and her school (Soham College), we created a long-term provision plan designed to help Lilia:

- Study in a comfortable, anxiety-free environment
- Gradually catch up on missed learning
- Rebuild her confidence
- Achieve great GCSE results

Flexible support

Academy provision can flex up or down as needed without long waiting times for families. This allowed us to start Lilia on a lighter timetable with a handful of subjects, gradually expanding over time — perfect for building her confidence and avoiding overwhelm.

"I particularly appreciated starting with fewer subjects to begin with which eased any former feelings of being overwhelmed, there I could build up on my subjects as I gained confidence." – Lilia

Comfortable learning

Online alternative provision offers the ideal environment for anxious students like Lilia. Learning at home eliminates triggers like crowded hallways and noisy canteens, giving children space to focus and study comfortably.

"The small classes at Academy21 are brilliant, and Lilia was able to get a lot of support from her teachers in lessons and with the Friday tutorials which she found very helpful." – Coralie and Nigel, Lilia's parents



Your child's journey starts here

At Academy21, we're committed to nurturing potential and helping every student to flourish, no matter their circumstances.

Our online alternative provision can bring your child:

- Experienced, qualified teachers who understand their needs
- Interactive, engaging lessons in small class sizes
- Flexible timetables to suit their circumstances
- A safe, supportive learning environment
- A proven pathway to regaining confidence and achieving goals

Next steps

We support thousands of families with online provision each year, and we'd be delighted to help make a difference for your child too.

If you are interested in exploring Academy21 as an option for your child, get in touch with your child's school to discuss how online alternative provision could work for you.

Academy 21

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