



St Margaret's  
Academy

ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Autumn Newsletter #14  
9th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Welcome back, everyone, to the Spring Term!**

It's wonderful to see all our families after a well-deserved festive break.

The children have made a fantastic start to the term and are already diving into exciting new learning topics. Curriculum updates for the Spring Term will be shared by your child's class teacher—if you haven't received these yet, please get in touch with them directly.

We're also thrilled to introduce a new weekly Key Stage assembly, giving children the chance to come together and celebrate learning. This half term, our assemblies have a music theme, which the children are really enjoying! Alongside this, teachers are running focused pre- and post-teaching sessions with small groups to help every child feel confident and supported in their learning.

We have lots planned for this term, including exciting trips and visits that the children will love. Please keep an eye on the calendar and dates section for more information. It's been a brilliant start, and we can't wait to share more about how these initiatives help your children thrive throughout the term.



**Wellbeing Ideas to start the New Year 2026**

HOW to HAVE the BEST YEAR

@POSITIVELYPRESENT



## Helping Little Ones Settle Back After Christmas

It's completely natural for some children to find it tricky getting back into school routines after the holidays. The transition from festive fun to structured days can feel overwhelming—and that's okay!

To help, we're sharing a helpful poster from *The Contented Child* with practical tips for re-establishing positive routines and easing the return to school. These strategies can make mornings calmer and help children feel more settled and confident. The Contented Child website offers a wealth of resources not just for parents, but for friends and family too. If you know someone who could benefit—grandparents, carers, or family friends—please feel free to share this link with them. Together, we can create a supportive network for our children.

**Visit:** [www.thecontentedchild.co.uk](http://www.thecontentedchild.co.uk)

### Evening Routines that Help with Back-to-School Anxiety

- 1** **Same steps every night**  
Keep bedtime in the same order (dinner → homework/play → bath → story/quiet time → sleep).
- 2** **Calm before bed**  
Turn off screens 1 hour before sleep. Try reading, colouring, or soft music.
- 3** **Talk worries out**  
Give 5–10 minutes to share worries. Try a 'worry box' or notebook.
- 4** **Relax the body**  
Deep breaths, gentle stretches, or calming sounds can help the body switch off.
- 5** **Create comfort**  
Cosy bed, soft light, favourite toy, or a weighted blanket can ease anxiety.
- 6** **End with connection**  
Bedtime story, cuddle, or 'goodnight phrase' builds safety and calm.

**The Contented Child**



## Torbay SEND Family Voice

There is a 'Graduated Response Parent Focus Group' on Monday 12th January 2026 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. If you'd like to take part, please get in touch or complete the expression of interest form using the QR code or the link. <https://forms.office.com/e/ZHWU7p3vhu>

Guest: Jeanette Savage, Head of Service for Quality First Teaching and School Improvement

Get In Touch [admin@familyvoicetorbay.org](mailto:admin@familyvoicetorbay.org) 07554 040107

Parkfield House, Paignton, TQ3 2NH



## Contacting the Hearing Support Team

If you have any messages, questions, or queries, please feel free to contact us via our new email address: [hearingsupport@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:hearingsupport@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk). A member of the team will check this inbox daily and respond to you as soon as possible.

In addition, we are delighted to invite you to a Tea and Coffee Morning on Tuesday, 10th February, from 9:30–10:30am in the Woodland Den. This will be a lovely opportunity to network and catch up with other families and friends whose children access support through this team.

Please save the date—more information will follow soon.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend and that the weather isn't too wet, so we can all enjoy some fresh air. Take care, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday.

***Mrs Nikki O'Dwyer***  
***Headteacher***

ACTIVE THINKING



RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



## Useful Reminders and Sign-posting

### Supporting families to sleep safely in a home with mould or damp

#### What is the challenge for families?

The health dangers associated with mould or damp are now well understood and families are much more aware of this than ever before. Worry about the impact of mould and damp can lead families to change their sleeping arrangements in an attempt to protect their children from mould or damp. However, these changes can make it hard to follow safer sleep guidelines. This is usually because either there is limited space, or families can't move the cot to another location within their home.

#### What can I do?

Housing teams play a vital role in identifying damp or mould risks early, helping to protect babies and young children.

Follow these simple steps when a family contacts you about mould or damp in their home:



**1** Ask if the family have young children or look after young children (under the age of two years).



**2** If the answer is yes, ask the family **if they have changed their children's sleeping arrangements** as a result of the mould or damp.



**3** Find out what the current sleeping arrangements are, **highlighting safer sleeping advice** to the family: [Safer sleep overview | The Lullaby Trust](#)



**4** **Support them to get a safer sleeping space** if they do not have their own clear, separate sleeping space such as a cot, travel cot or Moses basket. Ensure they are directed to The Lullaby Trust's emergency advice: [Safer sleep away from home in emergency situations | The Lullaby Trust](#)

A baby sleeping place can usually be sourced quickly. Social services departments will have links, or go directly to baby banks, Homestart or charity shops. Reiterate the importance of the baby having their own sleeping place and find someone who can help the family sleep safer.

Thank you for giving families a safer start to life.

the lullaby trust

NCMD  
National Child Mortality Database

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# Torbay School Nursing Team



## School Nursing Service Parent and Carer Drop in

A member of the school nurse team will be attending your child's school on:

**Date:** Friday 13th February 2026

**Time:** 1.30pm - 2.30pm

We will be able to offer support and advice for:

- Bowel and bladder
- Diet and nutrition
- Sleep
- Emotional wellbeing
- Behaviour (if there is an associated health need)

**No booking needed,  
just turn up!**

### Contact Us

T: 0300 333 5352 (Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm)

E: [tsdft.0to19torbay@nhs.net](mailto:tsdft.0to19torbay@nhs.net)

A: 0 to 19 Torbay, St. Edmunds, Victoria Park Rd, Torquay TQ1 3QH

W: [torbayfamilyhub.org.uk](http://torbayfamilyhub.org.uk)

Chat via the Torbay Family Hub App



Torbay and South Devon

Piano, Violin and  
Singing lessons  
now available.

Lessons take  
place during the  
school day and  
are charged at:

One to one:  
30 minutes £20  
20 minutes  
£13.50

Groups:  
from £7

for more details  
contact:

Laura @ [Blossomsmusic.co.uk](http://Blossomsmusic.co.uk)  
07515 805 812

**Blossoms**  
Music @  
St Margaret's





If your child was born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 they should start school in September 2026.

### What do I need to do?

Applying for primary school - it's as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Read the TIPS 8 guidance booklet on our website (printed copies available upon request)
2. Apply online from 1 November 2025 - [Apply for a primary school place - Torbay Council](#)

or

Contact us to request an electronic form - E: [pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk); T: 01803 208908

3. Submit your application by 15 January 2026

### You must complete an application even if:

- You already have an older child at your preferred school
- Your child attends a nursery attached to a primary school
- You have completed a registration form at a primary school
- You have sent in a supplementary form to a primary school



TORBAY COUNCIL

## Lumi-Nova—What's it all about?

You may have seen reports on BBC Spotlight recently about a new app called Lumi Nova.

Lumi Nova supports children to build confidence and learn lifelong skills to manage their fears and worries through an intergalactic adventure game.

It's been used by more than 1,100 children in Devon and more than 90% saw their condition reliably improve or stabilise after using it.

Lumi Nova is available to families in partnership with Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD).

Powered by science and backed by the NHS, Lumi Nova is:

- Designed for children aged 7-12 years
- Suitable for children with mild to moderate fears and worries
- Safe and secure
- Recommended by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

In particular, children with SEND have seen significant improvements after using the service – 97% experienced reliable improvement or saw their condition stabilise.



## Youth Mental Health Foundation

Need help supporting a child struggling with their emotions, behaviour or mental health?

A free coaching session takes place in the new year for parents and carers living in or sending their child to school in Torbay.

There are two information sessions for interested parents and carers on Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th January.

Book a place on one of these sessions:

[Select a Date & Time - Calendly](#)

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# Diary Dates

12th January 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson
19th January 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson
26th January 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson
2nd February 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson
9th February 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson
16th February 2026— 22nd February 2026	Half Term
23rd February 2026	First Day Back for Children

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Ash	Evie	For her perseverance ( for continuing to try even when things seem tricky ) in her writing - Evie has really begun to think about how she can control her pencil to form recognisable letters - thinking about where the letter starts and ends and its shape - well done - keep trying !
Elm	Tashaun	This week Tashaun is the star of the week. For his aspiration to achieve his goal, by creating his New Years Kindness Wishing Wheel! - Well done Tashaun, Miss Tolley is proud of you!
Beech	Rudi	For having a fabulous first week back and for being amazing in phonics with Miss Blackburn. Settling well and for making kind choices. He also worked well with others at Forest School.
Pine	Lyla	Lyla is our star for the effort that she has put into her writing this week. She worked all on her own to write some beautiful sentences about the seaside.
Apple	Bailey	Before the holiday, Bailey was consistently showing aspiration in his learning and he has started the new year with a bang!. He listens carefully and his hand is always up to answer questions. He is so enthusiastic with his writing and is a true star!
Oak	Callie	Callie has had an amazing first week back. She has been incredibly kind and helpful both in the classroom and at forest school. She has also listened and participated very well in the maths lessons about shape. Super effort Callie- you are a star!
Willow	Cassidy	Willow's star of the week is Cassidy for showing a wonderful attitude towards adults in our class. She has been very supportive to those around her and consistently shows a great responsibility for herself and others.
Holly	Addison	This week Addi has adapted to the changes in and out of the classroom really well. She has shown resilience and has taken responsibility for herself and where she should be at all points in the day. Keep up the fantastic work Addison!
Cherry	Athena	For your fantastic writing this week - we have been so impressed with your expanded noun phrases and your presentation in your book. Keep it up.
Hazel	Martha	Martha is the star this week for her aspirational attitude in her writing. She has shown excellent responsibility when choosing her language and upleveling her sentences. Well done Martha, we are so proud of you! Keep it up.
Rowan	Thomas	Thomas is the star of the week in Rowan class for his positive, aspirational attitude towards his learning. He tries his best in everything he does and completes tasks with determination and focus. Well done Thomas.
Birch	Isabella	This week's Star of the Week is awarded for the fantastic improvement in attitude. She is responding in a calm and sensible way. This shows real responsibility, resilience, and maturity. We are incredibly proud of the effort she has made and the positive choices she is continuing to show every day.
Hawthorn	Louis	What a superb start to the spring term! Your hand is always up and you're being very inspirational with your thinking. We were particularly impressed with your passive voice sentences today about Ernest Shackleton. Well done Louis!
Maple	Fletcher	Our star of the week has started the term in an exemplary manner. He has ensured that he is ready to learn, organising himself and tackling tasks swiftly. His hand has been constantly up and it has been lovely to see his enthusiastic participation in all lessons. Well done, Fletcher!