

Barewell Road
Torquay
Devon TQ1 4PA
admin@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk
01803 327090



HANDS – FACE – SPACE and ACT AS IF YOU'VE GOT IT – useful mantras to keep us all safe.

5th February 2021 – End of Week 5 - Autumn Newsletter #6

Dear Parents,

This week has been *Children's Mental Health Week*. Children and staff have been sharing acts of kindness with each other to promote the school value of performing *kindness* as one of our 5-a-day for a healthy mind. Have a look in the '[Smiles in February 2021](#)' to see some fun photos from the week. Here's a lovely poem from Kyle in Year 3 called *KEEP BELIEVING IN YOURSELF*. He also wishes everyone, a good day. Thanks Kyle!

*When you lie awake at night
It can give yourself a fright
You want to run and take flight
You can try with all your might
To step in to the light
It can make you alright
Have a good day everyone*

Chromebooks Update – Massive Thanks to Calendar Club

By now the majority of you who need a Chromebook to help your child access the home learning have received one. As you know, we had a delivery of 38 from the Department for Education but this alone was not enough to meet the demand and need. Fortunately we have received a £6000 donation from the company, *Calendar Club* through a personal contact of Mrs Pike's. This has enabled the purchase of an additional 26 Chromebooks and means we can now lend a device to all the families who need one.

Although we don't yet know exactly how much longer this lockdown will last, we do know from your feedback that the Chromebooks already delivered are making a big difference to your children, and will continue to do so while we carry on with remote learning. At some point though, we will be back to full opening. As such we are now starting to plan ahead for how we can continue to make the best use of these devices when school is open as normal. We are discussing what we are now terming a *blended* approach to remote learning that will still incorporate the use of the Chromebooks. It is really a life skill being able to use technology to assist with one's learning so we anticipate there will still be a real need for the Chromebooks as teachers look how to blend face to face learning with remote learning in the future.

If you feel you still need a device and / or IT support with accessing the internet at home, please do get in touch so we can help as soon as possible.

Home Learning

Thank you again for your most recent feedback on our home learning provision. It's good to see that we're managing to make positive changes that help you such as the greater number of live sessions, covering more of the curriculum and almost all of you having no problems accessing the learning.

KINDNESS RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY ASPIRATION

You are particularly pleased with the communication which is great news as I know staff continue to prioritise this.

Pupil enjoyment and academic progress continue to be the main priorities for you with the former being more important to those of you with younger children. Having more than one child at home continues to be the biggest barrier. I know that some families with more than one child have recently benefitted from having Chromebooks so hopefully this might start to improve for some of you at home. As always, please do contact school to see if there is anything we can do to help you.

Learning in School v Home; the Juggle

Juggling the in-school learning provision with the home learning is one of the biggest challenges for teachers. Work in school aligns with that provided for home to try to ensure there are no gaps in the curriculum coverage for all pupils. In addition we are also providing a range of interventions and catch-up, some of which happen in school and some of which happen remotely via video call. Teachers and teaching assistants are providing this catch-up for small groups and 1:1 in phonics, writing and speech and language which will hopefully help mitigate some of the negative effect of lockdown we experienced last time.

Provision in School

We are performing another juggling act in working with you to keep our numbers to a minimum while also providing places to those who really need it. I do totally appreciate the difficulties many of you are having at home, such as juggling home learning with your work commitments and when you have more than one child who needs support. It must be incredibly challenging so please do contact school if you think we can help in anyway; if we can we will. We usually have about 30% of children in school and we are doing our best not to go any higher. However, we have noted that demand is increasing understandably with the challenges you face and the longer we go through lockdown.

Please can I appeal to those of you who can already book a place to only book the days you really need your child to be in school. This will help give us a tiny bit of capacity to support some families who are desperate for just 1 or 2 days a week.

Thank you for your continued support and for working with us.

Thank You

From all the feedback it's really clear how much you appreciate the hard work of your child's class teacher and the teaching assistants. If you feel it appropriate there is a national scheme where you can give more formal recognition to the teacher and / or the teaching assistant. It's called *Thank a Teacher* and the link is here: <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher/thank-a-teacher-form/>

Curriculum News

There's another super river model in the [Geography Blog](#) this week. Well done to Olivia-Mae in Year 6 for this one. Check out the [Reading Blog](#) for *purrrfect* photos of Year 6 reading at home. Have a look in the [Science Blog](#) to see Year 5 using Force Meters with Mrs Kennedy.

Staying Safe on Line (reminder) – stay SMART

Look out for my assembly on Monday with some more information about staying safe on line in readiness for Internet Safety Day on Tuesday 8th February. Do have a look at the *Think U Know* materials which are very helpful and can be found on the home page of our website. Home activity packs to support online safety at home can be found by [clicking here](#). If time is a bit short to look

through these packs, the best bit of advice is to keep communicating with your children; to be curious about their on-line world with open questions like, “do you ever come across anything that worries you online?” Ask them if they can remember what SMART stands for – *Safe – Meet – Accept – Reliable – Tell*.

Half Term Approaches (reminder)

Just a reminder that school will be closed for all pupils during the half term break, Monday 15th to Friday 19th February. There will be no home learning planned for the half term so you can take a breather and hopefully recharge and spend some less intense time with your children. If you think you might need any support during the half term break, please do get in touch with school in advance for whatever reason it may be.

If your child is entitled to benefits related free school meals, remember you are entitled to a voucher from *Wonde* which is now worth £30 during half term. We are also providing food parcels for anybody who might need additional help. Please do contact the office. Even if your child is not entitled to free school meals we will consider all requests and help if at all possible.

Torbay Council also offers a range of services that you might find useful. This is the link to their page: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/coronavirus/coronavirus-support/>
The direct phone line is 01803 446022, open 10.00-6.00 Monday to Friday and 9.30-12.30 Saturday.

Uniform

After half term we are asking children to return in school uniform tops; tops only, bottoms of your choice. This is to help return to normality and remind us of our school identity while having their own bottoms will make it easier for physical and outdoor activities by reducing the need to change.

Domestic Abuse Reminder

If you are needing any support during this time, there are a range of resources under the ‘Supporting Families’ page of our website which can be found under ‘Well-being in Action’. The latest advice on here is related to [domestic abuse](#). If you have been affected by this, you can get free advice, counselling, food and legal help by calling 01803 446022.

Healthy Start Vouchers Reminder

If you are pregnant or have a child under the age of 4 you might be eligible for these vouchers from the local authority. Check out the link here: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr8286/>

Difficulties with Speech and Language?

Remember, you can access the professionals’ Speech Link Parent Portal which is made free for all to use. This is an award-winning site and approved by the DfE, it includes fun activities, resources, advice and information. New content is added regularly and you will find the latest content at <https://speechandlanguage.info/parents>.

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Stay safe everybody. Enjoy your weekend.



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)