

# St Margaret's Academy

## ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

### Spring Newsletter #22 13th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a busy and wonderfully productive week at St Margaret's Academy, filled with moments to share, celebrate, and be proud of. Our children have shown great enthusiasm in their learning, staff have been working hard to provide rich opportunities, and the school has been buzzing with positive energy.

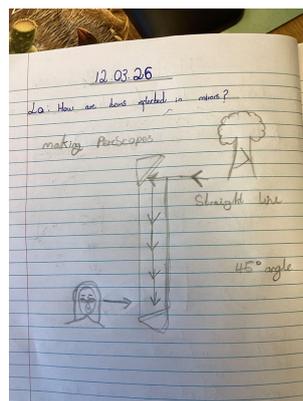
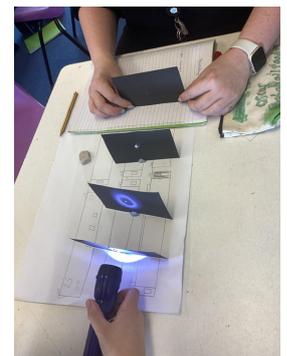
Across the week we've seen exciting classroom projects, great teamwork, and many examples of pupils showing our school values in action. From learning achievements to personal successes, there has been so much to acknowledge - well done to everyone involved.

As we look ahead, we also want to draw attention to some important upcoming dates and events. These will play a key role in the weeks ahead, and we kindly ask families to keep an eye out for further details so that pupils can make the most of all that's on offer.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

### Science in Year 6

Year 6 has been proving that light only travels in straight lines and that we can only see things if there is a light source. We explored why shadows get bigger or smaller and how we can use reflective objects. Finally, we looked at how we can see around corners using a mirror and we made periscopes to spy on Mrs O Dwyer!



ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



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## Year 2 News

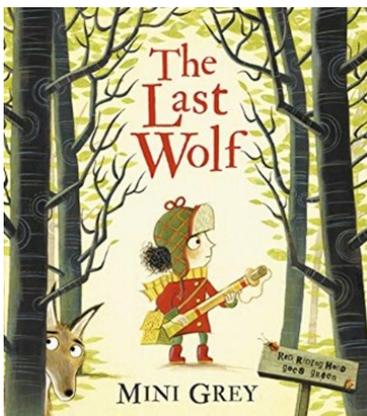
Year 2 has had a wonderfully busy week!

We began by planning and making our own healthy sandwiches and salads, making sure to include at least one vegetable. The children embraced the challenge with enthusiasm—**We will Eat Them to Defeat Them!**

Everyone bravely tried something new and encouraged their friends along the way. We also created our *Eat Them to Defeat Them* crowns and were lucky enough to enjoy a rare burst of sunshine for our photo shoot!

The sunshine joined us again for our walk to Petitor Woods, although there was still plenty of mud underfoot! During our adventure, we gathered lots of inspiration for our writing unit *The Lost Wolf*. We spotted misty skies, delicate blossoms, bumpy rocks, and gigantic steps - what a walk!

When we arrived back at school, we finished the day perfectly by enjoying our sandwiches with our teddy bears. A fantastic week of learning, exploring and trying new things!



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## **Trustee Visit—Thursday Review of School Priorities**

On Thursday, we were delighted to welcome our Link Trustees; Nik, James, Sara and Jane to St Margaret's Academy. Their visit focused on reviewing key school priorities and gaining a deeper understanding of the work taking place across our community to support high-quality teaching, learning and pupil wellbeing.

Our Trustees explored several important areas:

### **Writing Curriculum: Pathways to Write**

Trustees looked closely at the implementation of our Pathways to Write curriculum. This included:

- Reviewing pupils' progress in writing across year groups
- Talking with teachers and pupils about their experiences
- Observing lessons to understand how writing skills are being taught and applied

### **Attendance and Inclusion**

We analysed current attendance data and discussed our ongoing work to strengthen our inclusion offer. This included how we:

- Support families to overcome barriers affecting attendance and punctuality
- Put in place early, effective interventions
- Ensure all pupils feel welcomed, supported and able to thrive

### **LEGs Programme (Language Enrichment Groups)**

Trustees were also introduced to our Language Enrichment Groups (LEGs) - a programme designed to support pupils with language development. They saw how targeted sessions help children close gaps through swift, nurturing and focused intervention.

### **Learning Environment and Attitudes**

During their learning walk, Trustees observed:

- The general climate in classrooms and around school
- How pupils engage with learning
- The positive relationships evident between staff and pupils

They noted the strong sense of inclusivity and the calm, purposeful atmosphere that supports all learners.

We are grateful to our Trustees for their time, insight and continued commitment to our school. Their visits play an important role in ensuring we remain focused on our core priorities and continue to provide an environment where every child can succeed.



## Attendance & Wellbeing Update

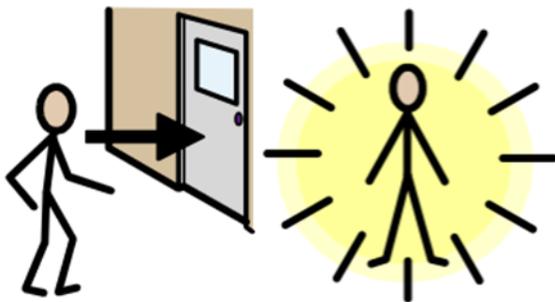
At St Margaret's, we are committed to making sure every child feels safe, welcomed and ready to learn each day. Here is a quick overview of what we're doing to support attendance and wellbeing, along with some of the developments coming soon.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW

- Staff welcome families at the gate every morning.
- School Council and Play Makers help support positive playtimes.
- Calming music played in break and lunch areas.
- Regular Pupil Voice surveys to gather children's views.
- Day-2 home visits where appropriate.
- Creative curriculum experiences offered throughout the week.
- Careers Week to strengthen community links.
- Trauma-Informed, relational approach embedded across school.
- "Stay and Play" sessions for Foundation Stage families.
- Soft starts for pupils who find mornings difficult.
- Positive phone calls home alongside support calls.
- Breakfast Club spaces for children needing support getting into school.
- Support meetings with families when needed.
- Sensory Circuits and Running Club to support routine and wellbeing.

### WHAT'S COMING NEXT

- Closer tracking of attendance for key pupil groups.
- Engagement in DfE projects to strengthen our offer.
- Visits to other schools to learn from strong practice.
- Updated Attendance Roadmap, policies and support documents.
- Termly celebration events for improved and sustained good attendance.
- Continued work to offer the best possible provision so children can thrive.
- Attendance summaries to be shared at Parents' Evening so we can work together when attendance needs support.



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## Comic Relief

As part of raising awareness for Comic Relief, we would like to invite children to take part in a light-hearted, optional activity at school. On Friday 20th March, children are welcome to come to school wearing a red accessory- this could be a hairband, badge, socks, or anything small and fun - alongside their full school uniform. Children may also bring a child-friendly joke to share with their class if they wish, helping us spread some smiles throughout the day.



Please note that participation is entirely optional, and we are not requesting any donations. We are very mindful of the incredible generosity our school community has already shown through numerous charitable events this year, and we want this to simply be an opportunity for children to enjoy the spirit of the day. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

## Torbay Coffee Morning

There are three Family Hubs across Torbay. They are a great place to meet professionals who can support you and your family – like health visitors, maternity services and family support workers. We are excited to host a session here on Tuesday 21st April 9.15-10.15 please meet in the school reception area.

### Our Family Hub network is working together with

- 0 to 19 Torbay, health visitors and school nursing
- 0 to 19 Torbay, Action for Children
- Torbay & South Devon NHS Foundation Trust
- Torbay Council
- Community & voluntary groups

### Get Involved

We have 3 **parent / carer panels** who meet regularly to help shape Torbay's Family Hub offer. These are through

- **Yes Brixham**
- **Windmill Centre**, Torquay
- **Unit 5**, Paignton

### Volunteer with us

Become a

- Chat play read champion
- Building babies brains champion
- Infant Feeding peer supporter
- Perinatal mental health peer supporter



Funded by UK Government

TORBAY COUNCIL



Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

### Key contacts

**Torbay Midwives**  
01803 654771

**Health visitors & school nursing (0 to 19 Torbay advice line)**  
0300 333 5352  
(Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm)

[publichealthnursing.torbay@nhs.net](mailto:publichealthnursing.torbay@nhs.net)

**Family Hubs**  
01803 210200

[familyhub@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:familyhub@torbay.gov.uk)

**The Beehive**, Paignton Enterprise Centre, Bishops Place, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 3DZ  
**The Barn**, Rea Barn Rd, Brixham TQ5 9DF  
**Zig Zags**, 32 Market St, Torquay TQ1 3AQ

**Torbay Council**

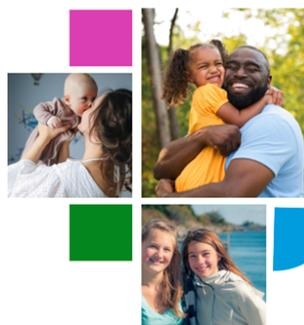
<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/>

### Virtual Family Hub

Take a look at our virtual family hub, packed full of information and advice plus groups and activities across the bay.

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

Familyhub  
TORBAY



Services and support for you and your family

We want to meet families in places where they feel comfortable so our Start for Life and Family Hubs support will be available in different places across the community and online. We hope that you will always find a way to join in that suits you and your family. Here's some of the services, and support you can access at Torbay family Hub. Full details about each are on our virtual family hub [www.torbayfamilyhub.org.uk](http://www.torbayfamilyhub.org.uk)

### Start for life

We are building on our current services to increase the support we can offer with;

- Perinatal Mental Health
- Parent - Infant relationships
- **Infant Feeding**
- Parenting and family support
- Speech, Language & Communication
- Child Development



### Pregnancy

- Midwife appointments
- **Online antenatal course**
- Antenatal classes
- Breastfeeding masterclasses
- Support for dads



### Babies and toddlers

- **Register your baby's birth at one of the Hubs**
- **Infant Feeding support**
- **Clinics run by the Health visiting team**
- Baby Massage
- Parenting and family support
- Language and Communication support
- **Portage groups**
- Child Development groups and support
- Emotional wellbeing
- Support for dads



### Primary aged children

- Getting ready for school
- School nurse drop ins and support
- National childhood measurement programme
- Sleep workshops

### Secondary age children

- Youth Service
- Care experience support
- Young carers
- Youth homelessness prevention
- Phoenix group for young people with a disability or extra support needs

### For parents and carers

- Emotional wellbeing
- Parenting courses
- Course for parents of teenagers
- Cost of living drop ins
- Housing support drop in
- Supporting parental relationships
- Family group conferencing



## PTA Easter Bingo

On **Friday 27th March**, 3:30–5:00pm, the PTA are arranging their fantastic *Easter Bingo*. As always, we will be holding a non-uniform day for all children on this date, and kindly ask that you donate an Easter egg of any size in support of the event.



All eggs can be brought into school on Thursday 26th March in advance, or on the morning of Friday 27th March, to enable the PTA some time to organise the prize hampers in readiness for the big event after school. More information will follow next week.

## A Special Mothering Sunday Message

To all the wonderful mums, nans, aunties and female guardians who care for our little ones - and our not-so-little ones - we want to send a heartfelt *thank you*.

Your love, strength, patience and endless support shape the children in our community every single day. Whether you're tying shoelaces, offering guidance, giving hugs, cheering from the sidelines or simply being a steady presence, please know how deeply appreciated you are.



We hope you enjoy a truly wonderful and relaxing Mothering Sunday.  
May you feel celebrated, valued and surrounded by the gratitude you so richly deserve.

With warmest wishes,

**Mrs Nikki O'Dwyer and the Team at St Margaret's Academy**

St Margaret's Academy PTA presents

# Easter Egg Bingo

Friday 27th March - After school in the school hall

£2 per person per book - includes a raffle ticket!

BINGO				
11	35	4	48	1
8	23	65	5	13
5	12	7	28	27
15	19	3	33	2

ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY PTA PRESENTS

# EASTER DRESS DOWN DAY

We are looking for Easter Egg Donations in exchange for a dress down day on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

We will be using the eggs for Easter egg bingo after school on the 27th March- more details to follow!

**PLEASE BRING YOUR EGGS ON OR BEFORE THE 27TH AND GIVE THEM TO YOUR CLASS TEACHER**

As always with your PTA, this is not mandatory – but your support is always appreciated.

## PRE-LOVED UNIFORM

PAY WHAT YOU CAN  
TAKE WHAT YOU NEED

Pre-loved uniform is always available from the PTA.

Please send us a message via our Facebook page and we can make arrangements for collection

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO CHOOSE RESPECT

Sometimes, differences between children can escalate into bullying, potentially impacting their mental health in a way that can persist into adulthood. While it's natural to disagree sometimes, teaching children the importance of respect is essential – especially in difficult situations. This guide provides strategies for encouraging considerate behaviour, even during a dispute, to foster a kinder, more inclusive environment for everyone.

## 1 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

As adults, we play a crucial role in modelling respectful behaviour for children: they observe and learn from our actions every day. Be mindful of the way you interact with others in front of children. Keep in mind that you should always approach others with an attitude of mutual respect, even if you disagree with them. Demonstrating this behaviour can influence young people and help them to handle their own conflicts in a healthy way.

## 2 AGREE TO DISAGREE

Make sure children know that it's fine to have differing opinions – and that disagreeing with someone doesn't mean you can't get along or respect each other's point of view. Help them understand that sometimes we can 'agree to disagree'. Using active listening skills when doing this can also help to build empathy and understanding of others.

## 3 PROMOTE ACTIVE LISTENING

Teach children about the importance of active listening: that is, making a genuine effort to listen to the other person's perspective without interrupting, before responding in a way that shows you understand their viewpoint, even (or perhaps especially) if you disagree with it. This makes people feel respected and allows for a better comprehension of their point of view, which in turn can make it easier for you to communicate your own opinions to them.

## 4 ENCOURAGE THE USE OF "I" STATEMENTS

If a child finds themselves in a disagreement with someone, it can be useful to encourage them to use "I" statements during the discussion. Framing their thoughts and feelings using statements like "I feel..." or "I think..." can help them avoid an accusatory tone and encourages them to take responsibility for their own emotions.

## 5 FOCUS ON BEHAVIOUR, NOT CHARACTER

When disagreements happen, encourage children to focus on criticising and addressing the specific actions or behaviours that caused the upset, rather than attacking the person's character. For example, "I didn't like how you interrupted me" is better than "You're so rude!". This can help children avoid hurting someone's feelings, which is likely to inflame the situation.

## 6 STAY CALM AND TAKE BREAKS

It's perfectly normal to feel upset during a disagreement – especially if it's getting heated. Remind children that if they feel overwhelmed, they should try to take deep breaths or even go for a short break to help them stay composed. If a conversation becomes too intense, remind them it's OK to suggest continuing it later or in a different setting. This can prevent things getting out of hand, allowing cooler heads to prevail.

## 7 START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESPECT

Talk openly to children about what respect means – to you and to them. Discuss how they might show respect to each other, to friends, to strangers and even to people we might disagree with. You could use examples of considerate or inconsiderate behaviour in books, films or TV to open discussions about the importance of giving others due regard.

## 8 SEEK COMMON GROUND

When a disagreement has occurred between children, they may find it hard to move past it. You can support them in finding a more positive way forward by helping identify areas of agreement or common ground with the other party. This can help to build bridges between differing opinions and foster a more cooperative atmosphere, as well as preventing those involved from demonising each other.

## 9 AVOID MAKING THINGS PERSONAL

It's important that we make it clear to children they must avoid name-calling, swearing or derogatory remarks in a disagreement with others. Respectful language sets a positive tone and helps keep the conversation productive. Reminding children to stay calm and take breaks – as mentioned previously – can help them avoid getting too emotional and saying or doing something hurtful.

## 10 REFLECT AND LEARN

After a child has had a disagreement, encourage them to reflect on the experience and think about what they can learn from it. What did they handle well? How might they improve their communication skills to handle conflicts more effectively in the future? You could use role play, writing and drawing pictures, or hypothetical examples to further develop their skills in showing respect during a disagreement.

### Meet Our Expert

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) co-ordinate Anti-Bullying Week each year. ABA is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve their vision to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. They welcome membership from any organisation or individual that supports this vision and support a free network of thousands of schools and colleges.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/choose-respect>

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# Diary Dates

16th March 2026	Rowan Class Swimming
17th March 2026	15.15—16.15 Y3/Y4 Football Home to Torre
23rd March 2026	Rowan Class Swimming
24th March 2026	09.00—12.00 Y5 Rowan Class Reach Outdoors (Archery & Indoor Climbing) 15.30—18.20 Parent Teacher Consultations (Spring Term)
26th March 2026	15.30—18.20 Parent Teacher Consultations (Spring Term)
30th March 2026	Y6 Leavers Hoodies worn from today Rowan Class Swimming
31st March 2026—2nd April 2026	Skern Lodge Residential Y6 (2 Nights)
Friday 3rd April 2026	No School—Start of Easter Spring Term Holiday
3rd April 2026—19th April 2026	Easter Holidays
20th April 2026	Start of Summer Term
28th April 2026	Year 5 Rowan Class—Kayaking

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Ash	Rosie	Rosie is our Star of the Week for working really hard in maths. She showed great understanding by quickly recognising the 5 within 7 without counting each one and carefully explaining her thinking. Well done, Rosie!
Elm	Maeve	Brilliant focus during phonics. You are a star with your Fred Talk blending. The whole of Elm Class have loved you teaching them how to make your fantastic flowers! Mrs Tolley is proud of you! Well done Maeve you are a super star!
Beech	Elsie H	Star of the Week goes to Elsie H for always showing all four of our school values. They consistently work hard, show respect, and set a great example for others. Well done!
Pine	Chaya	Chaya is our star for always getting that hand up. For always trying her best and for always wanting to help others. Well done Chaya, you are a pleasure to have in Pine class.
Apple	Mabel	This week Mabel has been so responsible with coming into school in the morning. She has also amazed everybody with her writing. She listens to everything she is asked to do and always writes with such imagination. She has even been doing extra writing projects at home. What an aspirational attitude Mabel!
Oak	Isabelle	Isabelle is our star for showing aspiration in her writing (using lots of great vocabulary and sentence types as well as recording it very neatly). Isabelle also showed resilience during our walk to the woods (it was very muddy, slippery and had some tricky parts to navigate). Great effort Isabelle!
Willow	Finley	Willow's Star of the Week is Finley. He always demonstrates all of our school values, giving kindness to his peers and staff alike. Always giving his best in every piece of learning and helping others to be their best too!! Well done Finley!
Holly	Jessica	Jess is our star this week, I am so impressed with how well she joins in and tries her hardest with everything. She consistently shows all four school values and is such a delight to have in Holly Class!
Cherry	Alfie	Super writing this week Alfie! Well done for taking on board feedback as to how to take your writing to the next level especially handwriting and richer vocabulary.
Hazel	Lylah	Lylah is our star in Hazel this week. She has produced some amazing work this week, particularly in her Geography. She is always aspirational with what she produces and ensures that her work is the best that it could be! It was also lovely to go to the dodgeball competition with her and have her represent our school. Well done, Lylah - we are so proud of you!
Rowan	Henry	Henry is the star of the week in Rowan class for the engagement he is showing in his learning. He is putting his hand up to answer questions and is working with focus and responsibility to complete his learning tasks. Well done Henry.
Birch	Arya P	This week, Arya has been a superstar! She has done a fantastic job concentrating on the adults in the classroom, focusing really well on her work, and not getting distracted by others around her. Arya has shown a brilliant improvement in her attitude to learning
Hawthorn	Poppy	Poppy is our star this week for her aspiration. Poppy always strives to do her best work but this week she has made an effort to complete more in the time she is given. She has also used her writing to create a news report and achieved superbly in her recent assessments.
Maple	Michael. G.	Our star of the week has shown great aspiration in his writing these last few weeks. He is consistently producing high levels of written work, confidently applying all our Year 6 grammar and making ambitious vocabulary choices! Well done Michael - very well deserved!