



St Margaret's
Academy

ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Spring Newsletter #3
31st January 2025

Dear Parents,

Whoosh! There goes January. We're moving closer to face the sun every day, bringing in more light filled fun, heralding warmer spring days lying just round the corner.

Lin Yandall

Today we sadly said goodbye to Lin Yandall who has worked at St Margaret's for almost 26 years! Lin started as a Meal Time Assistant back in 1999 at the time when the Millennium Dome was finished being constructed and Kevin Keegan was appointed manager of the England football team. Lin started work in the After School Club in 2007 before becoming the Supervisor in 2012.

For all those who know Lin, you will know how much dedication, energy and passion she has given to the After School Club. Lin is always in early setting up the fantastic range of activities that make the club such a draw for working parents and also for many children who just enjoy attending because it's so much fun.

On behalf of all the families and children, past and present, I would like to say a huge thank you to Lin. She will be very much missed and we all wish her the very best with her new adventures.

Careers' Week and Call for Help

It has been a super exciting week in school with loads of visitors joining us either in person or virtually to talk about their careers and how they got there. This is all part of the school improvement priority this year (led by Mrs Westwood, Mrs Wall and Mrs Tandy) to help raise children's aspirations for the future.

Have a look in our [PSHE Blog](#) where you can see videos and photos from across the school. It has certainly inspired children to think beyond only wanting to be either a You Tuber or a footballer.

We've heard from a drone flying Building Surveyor, a Post Office Manager doubling as a social worker, a college teacher, a chef, a police officer, a carpenter, a university lecturer, a cyber-security analyst, a web developer, a physiotherapist and an accountant. We finished the week with children coming to school in all sorts of different clothes of their possible future career.

We are looking to continue this work as part of our 'start small dream big project'. Please look out for a call for more volunteers next week. Please see the attached document 'call out for careers volunteers'. If you can help, please do complete this form and return to school. and return this form.

ACTIVE THINKING



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Curriculum News

In the Science Blog you can see the amazing 'walking water' experiments [Year 3](#) have been doing. Great fun. It reminds me of my Biology A Level.

You can also see how [Year 5](#) enjoyed the space dome visit on Wednesday this week.

In the RE Blog, you can see the Jewish Mezuzah prayer boxes [Year 5](#) made this week.

In the Science Blog you can see how [Year 4](#) have been exploring electricity and how [Year 6](#) have been making periscopes.



Student Council News

The minutes from latest student council meeting are now on the website which can be found [here](#). They will soon be pitching their ideas to the Senior Leadership Team next week. Read on though, to find out about their chosen charity.



Wear Red to Show Love for other children

Our student council has chosen to support the paediatric ward at Torbay Hospital as their selected charity to raise money for. Tying it in with Valentine's Day, we have chosen Friday 14th February as 'wear red day' and hope in turn you might give a small donation that will go direct to the paediatric ward. Here is a short message and thank you from staff at Torbay Hospital in advance:

We'd like to say a huge thank you to St Margaret's Academy for supporting our young patients cared for on our short stay paediatric ward at Torbay Hospital. Many children experience anxiety or fear during a hospital stay, and a fun and engaging environment with distractions and toys can make a massive difference. The Torbay and South Devon NHS charity is dedicated to raising funds to improve care for patients of all ages by providing additional items, equipment and support. The ward team is currently fundraising for sensory items for the children, and any contributions from St Margaret's Academy families through the 'Wear red to show love for other children' non-uniform day would be so appreciated and help us to better support local children. For more information about the charity, please visit our Facebook page or the charity website: <https://charity.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk>

School Uniform Reminder

Please do check our uniform policy and support us in making sure your child comes to school in the correct uniform. The checklist for uniform, jewellery and earrings and can be found [here](#) on our website. As stated in our policy, "St Margaret's Academy believes that a consistent school uniform policy is vital to promote the ethos of the school and provide a sense of belonging and identity for all pupils."

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to effective teaching and learning in a number of ways: it can instil pride, support positive behaviour and help ensure pupils of all races and backgrounds feel welcome as well as protecting children from social pressures to dress in a particular way.

For those children who struggle with certain sensory difficulties please do speak to our SENDCO, Mrs Essam, who will advise you on suitable alternatives. We are very grateful for your support with this.

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A Baby's Brain—Getting Talk!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! - Lock away that Device—Before it's too late

A worrying trend we are seeing in schools now is a rapid growth in children having problems with speech, language and communication. A soaring over use of technology is probably a big contributing factor to this trend. It's quite worrying – and telling - the number of young children who are now developing American accents and using American versions of words, despite never having lived in America.



Did you know that 90% of a child's brain growth happens before the age of five? The more we chat, play and read with our kids, the more we help build their brains. Anytime, anywhere, whether at home or out and about, it all adds up.

There's no need to buy lots of toys or have big days out. Wherever you are, simply chatting back and forth, answering your child's questions and sharing special moments together all help their brain to grow and develop secure and strong connections.

[The Start for Life website](#) is packed with simple ideas from other parents on how to build these little moments into each day. It includes lots of examples of tips and activities for you to do together with your child at different ages, as well as links to find further support in your local area.

[This short video](#) explains how children's brains develop during the early years, and the crucial role parents play through all the little moments they spend together with their child.

Advice on Health and Fitness Apps

Under our Parents tab – 'Useful Resources for Parents' you can find advice on [health and fitness](#) apps covering the risks (lack of personalisation, not developed by experts, reduced interactions with others, privacy concerns, additional costs and dependency) as well as advice on exercising, socialising, promoting a positive body image, reviews of the app and how to use parent controls.

Tips for Managing Emotions

In 'Useful Resources for Parents' you can find top tips for helping your child manage their emotions which include. It's really well worth a look. Quick link [here](#).

Help with Savings

Check out this government resource that can help you save and reward you with payments along the way. Ideal for anybody on universal credit. [Sign in to your Help to Save account - GOV.UK](#)

Neurodiversity Resource Website

We would like to make you aware of the NHS Devon's new Neurodiversity resource website, which has been developed to support parents, carers, children and young people, and those working with children and young people with Neurodiversity, in Devon, Torbay and Plymouth. The link is below: [Neurodiversity - Getting Advice and Getting Help](#)

The website includes a range of resources, videos and information about what is available in our local area, and nationally, for children, young people and families. It has been co-produced with clinical colleagues, parent/carers and young people and designed as a 'one stop shop' for key information about Neurodiversity. We hope that you find it useful.

We would also highly recommend our Facebook users to follow 'SEND Family Voice Torbay' to learn of other support for children with SEND, including free support networks and free training for parents/carers.



Seeds and Compost

Our children have been very busy in the orchard preparing for Spring. We would be very grateful for any donations of seeds or compost for them to plant.



Our Amazon Book Wish List

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/FOD16NCSLQOX?ref=wl_share

Help with Rising Costs - Reminders

Riviera Life Church Food and Baby Bank – [link here](#). We can make a referral for you or phone 07486 402493

Household Support Fund – if you are on a welfare benefit / tax credit or have a disposable income of less than £50 per week:

[Household Support Fund - Torbay Council](#)

Do you need help with child care? If so, try this website: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Help for households – very useful government website: <https://>

helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/

This community kitchen has some very affordable meal options and is well worth a look:

<https://www.turningheads.org.uk/community-kitchen/>

The PTA has lots of quality school uniform for a small donation – see their FB page

Martin Lewis: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/>

Free uniform and help with rising costs: <https://www.punkagainstopoverty.org/>

Try here for cheaper broadband: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>

Wishing everyone the best weekend

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Hughes'.

Tim Hughes (Headteacher)

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Diary Dates

13th February 2025	PTA Valentines Disco
14th February 2025	Wear Red Day to show love for children in Torbay Hospital (Student council chosen charity)
W/C 17th February 2025	Half Term
24th February 2025	First day back for children
1st April 2025	Non Uniform Day to donate an Easter Egg for the Thursday Bingo
3rd April 2025	PTA Easter Bingo after school
W/C 7th April 2025	Easter Holidays
22nd April 2025	First day back for children
5th May 2025	Bank Holiday
W/C 26th May 2025	Half Term
3rd June 2025	First day back for children
24th July 2025	Final day for the children



Beech	Gabriella is our star this week. She has been a great team player, always offering help and showing kindness to her classmates. Her positive attitude makes her a joy to have in the class!
Pine	Ruby is our Star of the week. She has been such a superstar at coming into school and gives the biggest hugs ever! Well done Ruby!
Oak	Ivy is our star as she always participates extremely well in the lessons. She also showed a great amount of resilience when lighting a fire in her forest school sessions this week. Super effort Ivy, well done!
Apple	Cody is our star this week. He has made massive improvements in all areas of his learning and is growing in confidence every day. We are really proud of you Cody - well done.
Holly	It is so hard to believe that this week's star has not received this before. His amazing attitude to learning is exemplary from the first minute he comes into the classroom. We have been particularly impressed with his motivation in publishing his final piece this week. Zane, super effort .
Willow	Samuel is the star of the week in Willow class. He has been showing great motivation with his maths learning on division this week. He is also always super helpful in class. Thank you Samuel.
Cherry	Finn is this week's star of the week. He always shows determination in his learning and he is always motivated to finish what he has started, even if it means he carries on for a little bit longer. He has worked really hard this week. Well done Finn.
Hazel	Lennon is our star of the week. We have seen such a change in his motivation this week and he has been extremely resilient in parts of his learning he has found tricky. You truly deserve this award! Well Done!
Birch	Ellis is our star of the week! We were so impressed by the story Ellis wrote for his independent write this week! He worked extremely hard, using lots of active thinking, to craft a well thought out narrative piece. Very well done, Ellis!
Rowan	Henry is this week's star in Rowan class. He has shown incredible motivation and resilience in recent weeks. He has worked hard in writing and to understand some tricky new methods in Maths - keep up the incredible work!
Maple	Freddie has been an absolute star this week; he has been so passionate about our career-related learning and has asked lots of thoughtful questions to our visitors. It is clear that Freddie is very motivated about his future aspirations! Well done Freddie.
Hawthorn	Bertie has had an incredible week! He has used his active thinking and contributed well to lessons, he has shown patience towards other learners and shown his expertise through his work particularly in science! Keep this up Bertie!

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