

St Margaret's Academy

22nd January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

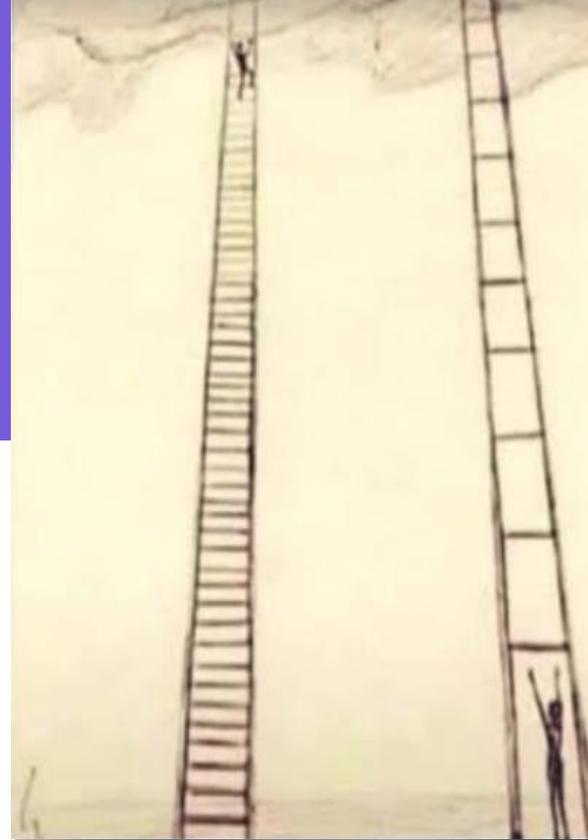
I hope you are all managing to stay as well as possible during this new lockdown. We know it can all seem a bit overwhelming at times, juggling all the pressures of home life. Staff at school have asked me to pass on their best wishes to you all and to let you know that they think you are all doing a fantastic job. Hang in there. We'll be out the other side before you know it

Healthy Start Vouchers

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?

During the first lock down last year we noticed the speech and language of many of our youngest pupils was badly affected. This time, we're trying to mitigate against this as best as possible. Our teaching assistants might already have contacted some of you about this (or will shortly be doing so) to help provide support via video call. To further help any of you who during this tricky time, 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>.



The importance of smaller steps

Above is a lovely image Mrs Kerswell found that might help if it's all feeling just too much. I will be sharing in my assembly next week also.

If you need a chat or any support, please do phone school and we'll do our best to help. We have a wonderful pastoral team of staff as I'm sure you know who are always very willing to help.

Remember you can also check out our '[Smiles in January](#)' page under 'Well-being in Action' where you can read some good news stories, see some lovely photos and read the fun newsletters that teaching assistants are producing for your children

The image shows four NHS informational cards arranged in a row. Each card has a title, three tips, and a small illustration. The cards are: 1. 'TOP TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ANXIETY' (orange background) with tips: 'Try a short breathing exercise', 'Learn how to manage anxious thoughts', and 'Keep a mood diary'. 2. 'SOME SIMPLE TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP' (blue background) with tips: 'Keep regular sleep hours', 'Attempt not to check your phone for an hour before bed', and 'Consider turning your clocks away so you can't see it'. 3. 'TOP TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS' (light blue background) with tips: 'Divide big tasks into small ones', 'Create to-do lists', and 'Stay active'. 4. 'SIMPLE TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MOOD' (green background) with tips: 'Learn how to manage unhelpful thoughts', 'Stay active', and 'Talk to someone'. Each card also includes the NHS logo and the text 'When things aren't so good but there... make inside feel better. Visit Every Mind Matters for more tips and advice.' and the 'every mind matters' logo.

IT Update – Exciting News

Our allocation of Chrome Books from the DfE arrived yesterday! Mr Kelley and Mr Kris Alister-Jones (our amazing tech men who seem to work 24/7 behind the scenes keeping us operational) are busy getting them ready for collection, starting today. If you have let us know you need a device, look out for a phone call from today onwards. As it takes time to set each one up, they will be lent out to pupils in batches of 5 at a time so bear with us in getting them to you.

If you're accessing the learning at home is not device related, remember that many mobile operators are offering free upgrades to unlimited data at this time. Currently, the following operators have partnered with the DfE to provide this: EE, O2, Sky Mobile, Smarty, Tesco Mobile, Three, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone.

Feedback on Home Learning

Thank you again for your feedback in the last survey. For your information, Mrs Turner and Mr Marchant have captured what we have done in response to this which you can find under 'curriculum information' – 'HOME LEARNING' – ['feedback to parents'](#).

Our approach to home learning is constantly evolving and improving. You will have likely seen an increase to the level of interactivity provided and many of your children will also be involved in additional remote teaching for phonics, writing and speech and language. I'm always impressed by the dedication of staff here at St Margaret's to go the extra mile to help your children – so thanks again to everybody for putting in these extra efforts. We are really trying not to lose the hard work and progress made in the autumn term by your children.

Hearing Support and Cued Speech UK

You might recall that that on the last day of the autumn term, we had a non-uniform day to raise funds for the charity, *Cued Speech UK* who works with our hearing impaired pupils. As you might imagine, they struggle to raise funds during the pandemic so were very grateful for your contributions. You can find out more about their organisation here <https://www.facebook.com/cuedspeechuk/>

Thank you St Margaret's Academy!

We are doing are best to raise funds wherever we can and one new way is by schools raising funds for us during Mufti Days.

We were delighted when St Margaret's Academy in Torbay offered to take part and last Christmas they raised an amazing £181.41!

Curriculum News

You may remember that in December, children wrote letters of goodwill to the residents of Dunboyne Court. This week, we were thrilled to receive some letters in response! See the [Writing Blog](#) for more information.

Interested in Drumming?

When the lockdown ends we will be offering drum lessons in school. If you're interested, keep an eye out for information about this. In the meantime, here's a fun drumming activity at home using pots and pans if you fancy having a go: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2uHSWQhyu8>

News, hot off the press: from next week staff at school will be self-testing twice a week which will help keep everybody safer. Finally, some small reassurance: infections in Torbay have dropped slightly and we're still well below the national averages.

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

Happy weekend everybody and stay safe.



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)

