



# St Margaret's Academy

Dear Parents,

As I'm sure you have heard, sadly we will still not be fully open until 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at the earliest. This means there are at least 4 more weeks of home learning for you to navigate, along with all the other pressures that come with this. I hope this newsletter helps provide you with some further suggestions and support to get through this time.

I can also confirm that school will be closed for all pupils during the half term break, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February.

## Half Term Support

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 that you are entitled to a voucher from *Wonde* which is worth £20 during half term. We are also providing food parcels for anybody who might need additional help. If you think this might apply to you, 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/>  
Their direct phone line is 01803 446022, open from 10.00-6.00 Monday to Friday and 9.30-12.30 on a Saturday.

## USEFUL LINKS

### 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/>



### Speech & 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>.

## KEEP SMILING

### Home Learning

Teachers and teaching assistants are continuing to work hard with the home learning offer while balancing this with the challenge of providing face to face learning in school. Since we started in January, we've improved the amount of interactivity taking place between teachers and pupils, whether this is live lessons or activities to promote communication and language. Our pastoral team is in additional regular contact with many of you and our teaching assistants are doing a fantastic job providing additional remote and in-school small group and 1:1 lessons for phonics, writing and speech and language. We are also thinking a lot how we provide the best feedback on your child's learning with various live events / lessons to support this.

Your feedback to us is really useful. Last time we were able to make a few changes as a result. With remote learning due to carry on now for at least another 4 weeks, Mrs Turner and Mr Marchant have opened another parent survey to get your input. You will already have had a letter about this but as a reminder here are the links again. They will be open until Wednesday and should only take about 5 minutes to complete:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8T9X635> (FS and KS1)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8MKSSQ7> (KS2)

### Staying Safe on Line

We're approaching Internet Safety Day (8<sup>th</sup> February) when we'll be taking this opportunity to raise the profile of how to best stay safe. In the meantime, do have a look at the *Think U Know* materials which are very helpful. There is a feed to this 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*. This is the acronym we use in school to guide our conversations and learning about internet safety – more in my assembly on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

If you need a smile, remember to look on our 'Well-being in Action' page under 'LET'S SMILE'. The 'Smiles in January 2021' is full of smiles from this lockdown, including the fun newsletters from our teaching assistants to your children. Have a look in our Geography Blog to see a super river model from Josh in Year 6. In the History Blog you can see Year 3 Romans in lockdown.



### Budding Singers



Hopefully you saw the letter from Mrs Posey that went out earlier today. If your child enjoys singing and is missing Miss Pritchard's choir, then this might be just what they need.

## Connecting to the World Wide Web

The roll out of Chrome Books to families is proceeding well and I know from speaking to some of you that they are very much appreciated and quickly in use. If you are still waiting to borrow one, please bear with us as we work through our list. If you are still struggling in anyway with getting access to the internet, please do let school know. For example, we can support you with getting an increase to your data allowance.

## Domestic Abuse

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.

Stay safe everybody and enjoy your weekend



Tim Hughes Head teacher

## Reminders

The school office will be open Monday – Friday between 8.15am and 3.30pm

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If you have booked a keyworker session and you no longer need the provision please cancel the session on the school gateway or call the absence line.

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