



St Margaret's Academy

ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Autumn Newsletter #2 18th September 2026



Dear Families,

As we come to the end of another busy and productive week at St Margaret's, I would like to reflect on the many exciting developments taking place across our school community.

From School Council elections and PTA updates to the continued development of our support bases in line with the Torbay Education Strategy, there is much to celebrate. Thank you also to everyone who attended our recent parent information meetings. Your support and engagement are greatly appreciated.

Please also look out for a letter from Mrs Posey regarding our Forest School provision. This will provide information about how sessions will operate across the school and the clothing and equipment children will need. If you have any questions or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact the school and we will be happy to help.

As routines become more established, we know that some children may begin to feel a little more tired. We greatly value your support in ensuring children come to school well-rested, positive and ready to learn. We also appreciate the strong partnership we share with families, particularly when children experience occasional wobbles. Open communication helps us work together to support every child to succeed.

Welcome Back Meetings



Thank you to all the parents and carers who attended our Welcome Back and Meet the Teacher sessions this week. These meetings provided an opportunity to meet your child's teacher, learn about plans for the autumn term and academic year ahead, and discuss how we can work together to support your child's learning and wellbeing.

Starting a new school year, settling into a new class and building relationships with new staff can be an anxious time for some children. We greatly appreciate the support families have shown during this

important transition and hope you found the sessions informative and reassuring.

A reminder that our final meeting for Year 6 families will take place on Monday from 3.30pm to 4.00pm in the Year 6 classrooms.

We understand that work and other commitments may mean that some families are unable to attend these sessions. We hope that the information shared by class teachers through SchoolComms has provided helpful information and clarity about the term ahead. However, if you have not received this information, or if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher, who will be happy to help. We value strong communication between home and school and are always keen to work together to support the success and wellbeing of every child.



School Council Launch 2026-27

Our Voice counts....

We are incredibly proud of the 83 children across Year 2 to Year 6 who carefully planned and confidently delivered their election speeches to their classmates in readiness for the ballot elections, which took place in the school hall today.



Throughout the process, the children demonstrated exceptional maturity and thoughtfulness. They reflected carefully on how they could make a positive difference to our school, how they could listen to and represent the views of others, and how they could bring their classmates' ideas and suggestions to future School Council meetings.

At St Margaret's, we are committed to ensuring that young people's voices are heard and valued as we continue to shape our future direction, develop new ideas, and strengthen our contribution to the wider community. Our School Council plays a vital role in helping us create a school that we are all proud of while promoting a happy, healthy and successful society.

We are delighted to announce that, following the ballot, the children who received the most votes were celebrated in assembly and elected as their class representatives. These pupils will form the new School Council for 2026-27.

Class	Pupil Elected	Class	Pupil Elected
Oak	Freddie M	Hazel	Ayla
Apple	Eva	Rowan	Samuel
Willow	Rory	Birch	Lily
Holly	Albie	Maple	Thomas
Cherry	James	Hawthorn	Evie

They will be supported by Mrs Hollis, Mrs Bushnell and Miss Cullen, who will lead the School Council this year. Their first meeting will take place next week as they begin planning for the year ahead, including our first whole-school community event, [Yellow Day](#). This special event will raise awareness of mental health, bring our community together, and provide an opportunity to raise funds for this important cause.

Please join us in congratulating our newly elected School Council representatives. Equally, we would like to recognise and celebrate every child who took part in the election process. Their courage, commitment, strong British values and excellent citizenship were evident throughout, and they should all be extremely proud of their achievements. Well done to each and every one of you!

PTA AGM Notice

Thank you to all the parents, carers and family members who have expressed an interest in supporting the relaunch of our PTA, we were blown away by the level of interest.

Following the previous AGM, members of the former PTA committee stepped down and there were no new members elected. We are therefore giving plenty of notice for this year's AGM and inviting new members to become involved.



Based on feedback received from those who expressed an interest, the PTA AGM will take place on:

Monday 12th October at 5:30pm to 6:00pm

The meeting will take place at St Margaret's Academy in the Woodland Studio & Den. To support attendance, childcare will be available during the meeting, (children supervised in the Woodland Den section by staff).

The AGM is open to all parents, carers and school staff, and we would encourage anyone who is interested in supporting the school community to attend.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Elect a new PTA committee.
- Appoint the core roles of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer (roles may be shared where appropriate).
- Discuss how members would like to be involved in future events and activities.
- Agree how the PTA will work together to support our school community.

There are many different ways to contribute to the PTA, whether through a formal committee role, helping to organise events, sharing ideas, or volunteering your time when available. We are excited about working collaboratively with parents, carers, families and staff to create a vibrant and active PTA.

Our shared aim is to ensure that all children at St Margaret's Academy, and all of our families, enjoy fun, memorable and enriching experiences throughout the school year.

Further information will be shared next week, including a nomination form for anyone wishing to put themselves forward for a committee role. We look forward to seeing you on Monday 12th October and working together to establish our new PTA team.

Free Day Out Saturday 19th September

Entry to the Museum will be FREE for all visitors next Saturday 19th September as part of our [Heritage Open Days offer!](#)

Visit the museum as we unveil local histories of work within our galleries with a brand new trail inspired by this years' theme 'Everyday Histories'. Pick up one of our Trails of Trades and explore stories of working life in Torbay and Devon.



Torbay's New Education Strategy Launches

We are pleased to share that Torbay's new Education Strategy, Torbay Together 2026-2030, has now been launched. Developed in partnership with education leaders, schools, settings and key organisations across the area, the strategy sets out a shared commitment to improving outcomes and life chances for all children and young people in Torbay.

Through the Torbay Together partnership, schools and organisations will work collaboratively to drive improvement in five key priority areas:

- School readiness
- Reading
- Belonging and attendance
- High-quality transitions
- Pathways into education, employment and training

We are also delighted that Torbay has secured a Department for Education grant to support the appointment of an independent chair. This role will help lead the implementation of the Torbay Together plan, strengthen collaboration across the education sector, and maintain a strong focus on delivering meaningful improvements for children and young people.

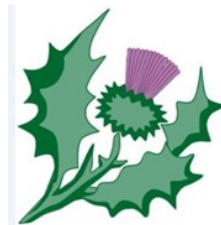
To find out more and read the full strategy, please visit the Torbay Council website:

[Torbay Together – Torbay Education Strategy 2026-2030](#)



Support Bases at St Margaret's Academy

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing the very best support for all children at St Margaret's Academy, we would like to update you on developments linked to the Torbay Education Strategy Plan and our own evolving SEND provision.



Following guidance and information shared by the Torbay SEND Team, and with the full support of our Trustees, we have made the decision to launch two dedicated Support Bases from the start of this academic year. This exciting development reflects our commitment to ensuring that every child receives the support they need to learn, thrive and achieve success.

Over recent months, staff have been engaged in extensive research, training and preparation to establish these new provisions.

Our Support Bases



We have introduced:

- A Key Stage 1 Support Base (Beech Grove) for children in Years 1, 2 and 3, led by Mrs Tandy, Assistant Headteacher.
- A Key Stage 2 Support Base (Treehouse) for children in Years 4, 5 and 6, led by Mrs Kerswell, Assistant Headteacher.

Both Support Bases will be supported by specialist staff with experience and training in providing targeted support for pupils who may benefit from a more bespoke approach to their education and wellbeing.

Over the past two weeks, we have been working closely with families, introducing children to the new environments, working with pupils in class and carefully planning the provision to ensure a positive start.

What Will This Mean for Children?

It is important to emphasise that children who access the Support Bases remain fully part of their class and year group. They continue to belong to their class community and will learn alongside their peers.

The Support Bases simply provide an additional layer of support when needed. This may include:

- Targeted SEND interventions
- Therapeutic approaches
- Pastoral and emotional support
- Small-group or individual learning opportunities
- Bespoke provision designed to help children access learning successfully



Children may access the bases for specific parts of the day or week, depending on their individual needs, while remaining connected to their mainstream classroom experience.

Our Commitment to Every Child

At St Margaret's Academy, we believe passionately that when we successfully meet the needs of all our learners, we create even better opportunities for every child across the school.

We have high aspirations for all our pupils and want every child to feel safe, supported and able to flourish. Our core values of 'Respect, Responsibility, Kindness and Aspiration' underpin everything we do.

We will continue to work closely with families and external agencies whenever children are finding aspects of school challenging and will always seek the most appropriate support and provision to help them succeed. Equally, we remain committed to ensuring that all children can learn in classrooms where everyone feels safe, valued and able to achieve their best.



Looking Ahead

This is a significant and exciting new development for St Margaret's Academy. Similar models are being and have been introduced in schools across Torbay, and whilst this is new for us, we are confident that these provisions will have a positive impact on the children who need them most.

As with any new initiative, the Support Bases will continue to evolve and develop over time. Further information will be shared with families in the coming weeks, and our SEND Information Report and School Offer will be updated accordingly. We will also continue to align our provision with the wider developments emerging through the Torbay SEND Reform Strategy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

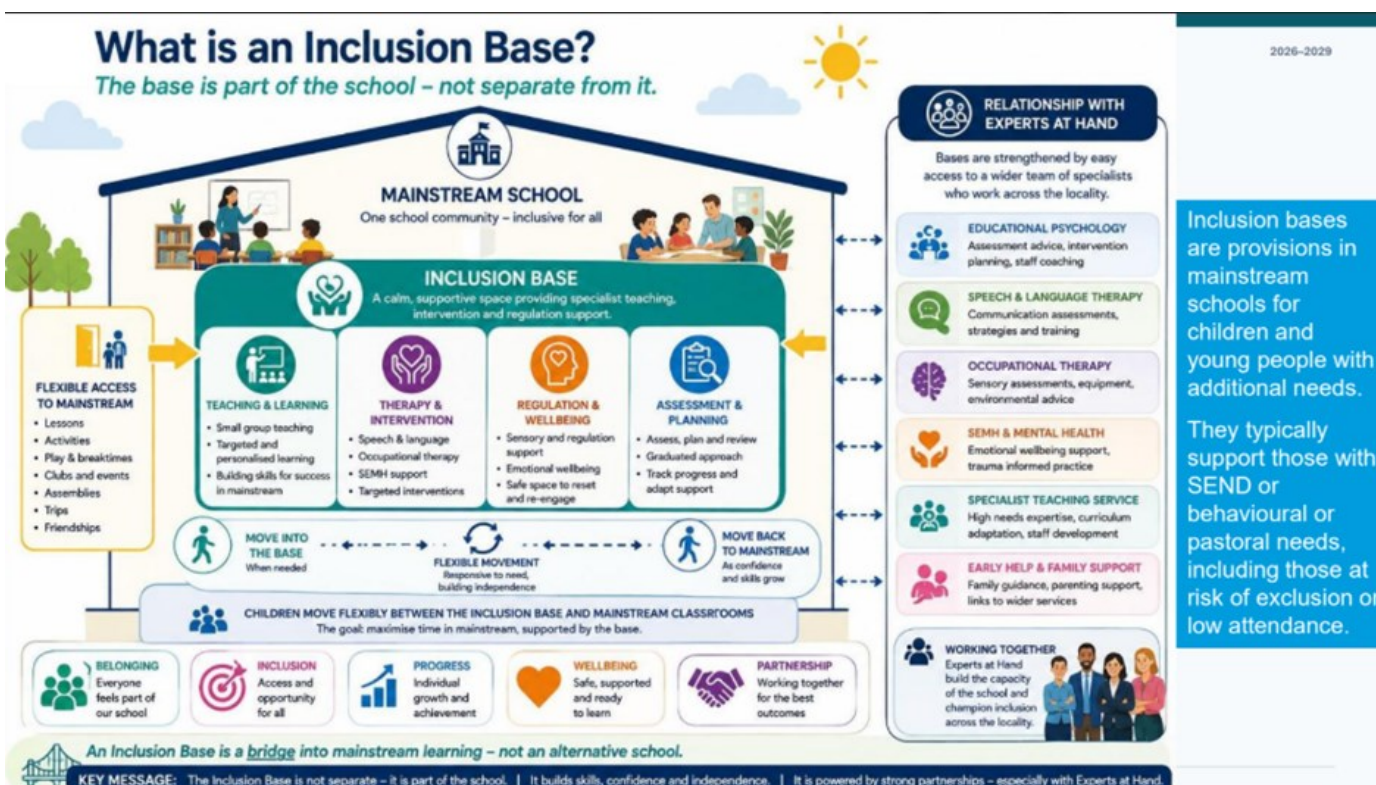
Mrs Essam, SENDCo sessam@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

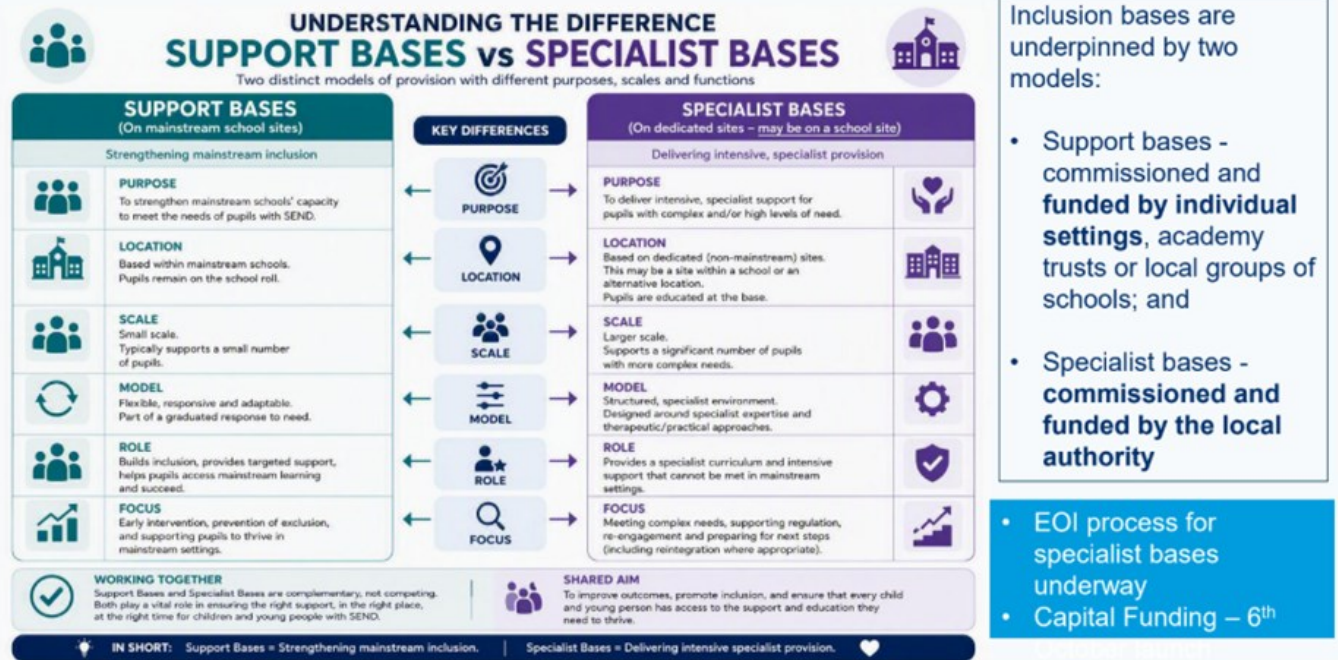
Mrs Tandy, Assistant Headteacher and Key Stage 1 Support Base Lead standy@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

Mrs Kerswell, Assistant Headteacher and Key Stage 2 Support Base Lead ikerswell@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to ensure every child at St Margaret's Academy can achieve their full potential.

Please see images below from Torbay on this development:





Finally, please remember to keep an eye on both the school website calendar and the dates section of this newsletter, as there are many important events and opportunities coming up over the next few weeks.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you all have a wonderful weekend.

Nikki O'Dwyer
Headteacher



Information for Parents

If you are looking for advice, support or guidance for you family,
The following websites offer a wealth of helpful information:

Family support and advice at home

For parenting guidance, local services, family activities and
Practical support, visit the **Torbay Family Hub**:
<http://torbayfamilyhub.org.uk/>

Physical and mental health support

The **Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD)** website provides information and resources
covering a wide range of children's physical health, emotional wellbeing and mental health needs:
<http://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/>

Online safety, gaming and social media

As children become increasingly active online, particularly in year 5 and 6, parents may find the
following resource helpful. **Youngminds** offers advice on mental health, online influences, gaming,
social media and supporting children through everyday challenges:
<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide?>

We hope these resources are useful and provide support whenever you need it.





Single Session Drop-in

We look forward to meeting you



Drop-In Single Sessions are available to parents and carers of children aged between 0 and 8 years old.



If you are looking for **guidance, advice or support**, relating to any aspect of your child's development, emotional and/or social health, we are available.



Single Sessions focus on what you want help with and together consider **your next steps** to beginning to improve your family wellbeing.



Where, When & Who?

The group meets at the Windmill Centre on Tuesdays and The Beehive on Fridays, alternating each week.
Call Leigh Williams on **07989144148**



Our Single Session options are inspired by the partnership between **Action for Children** and **Normal Magic**.





ARE YOU READY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR SUBSTANCE USE?



Under 18, in Torbay, and struggling with drugs or alcohol?



Are you worried about someone else's drug or alcohol use?



Do you want more information about the substances you or your friends are taking?



Scan for more information





YDAS offers personalised support to help you achieve your goals and make informed choices about drug or alcohol use.



PARENT / CARER *Coffee Morning*



Tuesday 22nd September



9:00 AM



St Margaret's Academy



Come and join us!



Please feel free to drop into school to meet with
other parents/carers and
Carrie (Family Support Worker).



Relaxed &
friendly
atmosphere



Stay for as little
or as long as
you like



A great way to
connect with
others



*Younger siblings are
very welcome to join!*



*Tea, coffee &
biscuits in abundance!*



No need to book – just come along!

We look forward to seeing you!



DICE Parenting Programme



DICE is a **4 week free universal support for parents/carers of pre-teens and teens** who are worried about parenting in the modern world, with the risks and challenges this presents.

DICE provides families with **information, advice and support** to help them provide a **safe and protective environment** for their child or young person.



The programme is running on a **regular basis throughout the year, online and face to face**.
Contact details overleaf for further information or a referral form.

01752 256339

exceed@barnardos.org.uk

[Online referral form](#)



DICE Upcoming Dates

Please note this is a 4-week course, therefore **please ensure you're able to attend all 4 dates listed**.
Online sessions are run on Teams.

Face to face
Four Woods Family Hub,
Plymouth

10am-12pm

Tues 15th Sept
Tues 22nd Sept
Tues 29th Sept
Tues 6th Oct



Online daytime
Microsoft Teams

10am-12pm

Weds 16th Sept
Weds 23rd Sept
Weds 30th Sept
Weds 7th Oct

Weds 11th Nov
Weds 18th Nov
Weds 25th Nov
Weds 2nd Nov

Online evening
Microsoft Teams

5pm-7pm

Mon 14th Sept
Mon 21st Sept
Mon 28th Sept
Mon 5th Oct

Mon 9th Nov
Mon 16th Nov
Mon 23rd Nov
Mon 30th Nov

Session 01: Introduction and the life of a teenager

The teenage brain, why teenagers might take risks and the pressures they face in the modern world.

Session 02: The exploitation of children and young people

Grooming - what is it, how does it happen, where and by whom? How can we spot the signs?

Session 03: Digital dangers

Social media, nudes and the complexities of the online world. How can we be better digital parents/carers?

Session 04: A safe place to share ideas about parenting

Parenting top tips - practical advice and information about communicating effectively, support networks and working together.



21st September 2026	Hawthorn Swimming 15.30—16.00 Welcome Class Meetings Y6
28th September 2026	Hawthorn Swimming
5th October 2026	Hawthorn Swimming Year 2 Animal Man Visitor
6th October 2026	Flu Vaccinations
9th October 2026	Hello Yellow Children's Mental Health Day
12th October 2026	Hawthorn Swimming
W/C 26th October 2026	Half Term Holiday
2nd November 2026	Maple Swimming
9th November 2026	Autumn Term Assessments Maple Swimming
12th November 2026	Y4 Ancient Egypt Visitor
16th November 2026	Autumn Term Assessments Anti-Bullying Awareness Week Maple Swimming
17th November 2026	17.00—19.00 Blossoms Winter Choirs Concert

ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION





Reception	Roven	For being an excellent role model of our school values respect and kindness.
Reception	Elijah	For showing amazing listening and a positive attitude to learning during Phonics.
Year 1	Oriah	For being amazing in her phonics lessons and for always being so cheerful and happy to see us
Year 1	Alayna	For her super writing today. She worked so hard to use her sounds when writing about the bear hunt.
Apple	Kaleb	Kaleb has had an amazing start to Year 2. Because of his amazing progress, is now a free reader and he is so proud of himself. He has also been working hard on creating some super sentences in his writing lessons. Well done Kaleb!
Oak	Wyatt	Well done! You have worked really hard this week and have been so focused on your learning. I am especially proud of how hard you have been trying with your letter formation. Keep up the fantastic work!
Willow	Alfie	For being kind, helpful and considerate to others. He is always eager to help both adults and his friends, especially with the laptops. Alfie is such a brilliant role model to have in Willow Class! Well done Alfie!
Holly	Fleur	Fleur is our star for her super aspiration and participation in the reading lessons. She always tries her best and is helpful and kind. Great start to year 3 Fleur, well done!
Cherry	Arlo	What an amazing start to Year 4! You have amazed all the Year 4 team with your attitude towards your learning. Well done young man!
Hazel	The Whole Of Hazel Class	"This week's Star of the Week is the whole class! I am so proud of how well you have settled back into school. It hasn't always been easy, but you have stayed resilient and worked as a team to overcome every challenge. You are an inspiration—very well done!"
Rowan	Cain	Cain is the star of the week in Rowan class for his amazing written work this week. He has produced aspirational pieces that are both descriptive and engaging. Well done Cain.
Birch	Liam	Wow, what a week you have had Liam! You have been exceptionally aspirational and independent with all of your learning this week, especially your reading and writing tasks. I am also so impressed with how confidently you stood in front of the class to present your school councillor speech. Well done!
Hawthorn	Lexi S	For showing great aspiration this week in her work and in preparing her school council election speech. She has also shown great resilience during our assessments, even when she has found something tricky. Well done, Lexi!
Maple	Thomas	For upholding all our school values, all the time. Thomas is always respectful and always ready to learn - showing aspiration in all subjects. He is a wonderful role model to those around him. Well done Thomas, keep it up!

