



ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Autumn Newsletter #1
11th September 2026

Welcome Back to St Margaret's Academy

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome back to all of our children, families and staff as we begin another exciting academic year at St Margaret's Academy.

We have had a truly fantastic first week back and would like to thank everyone for helping to make the return to school so smooth, positive and successful after the long summer break. It has been wonderful to see our classrooms and playgrounds filled once again with smiling faces, enthusiasm and a real eagerness to learn.

We hope that all of our children have settled back into school life well this week. Whether they are returning to familiar classes or starting a brand-new chapter, we are incredibly proud of how they have embraced the start of term with confidence and positivity.

There is so much to look forward to this autumn term, and we are excited to share many wonderful opportunities and experiences with our school community over the coming weeks.

Welcome Back Meetings

Over the next few weeks, we will be holding our Welcome Back Meetings, giving families the opportunity to meet their child's class teacher, find out more about the learning and experiences planned for the autumn term, and discuss ways that we can work together to support every child to thrive.

Strong partnerships between home and school play such an important role in children's success, and we encourage all families to attend if possible. Please check the dates below for details of when these meetings will take place.

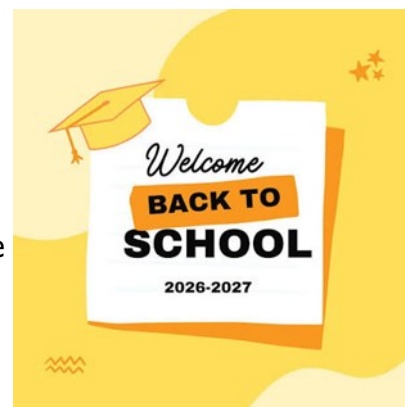
3:30pm - 4:00pm in your child's classroom

Monday 14th September - Year 1 and Year 4

Tuesday 15th September - Year 2 and Year 5

Wednesday 16th September - Reception and Year 3

Monday 21st September - Year 6



ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE

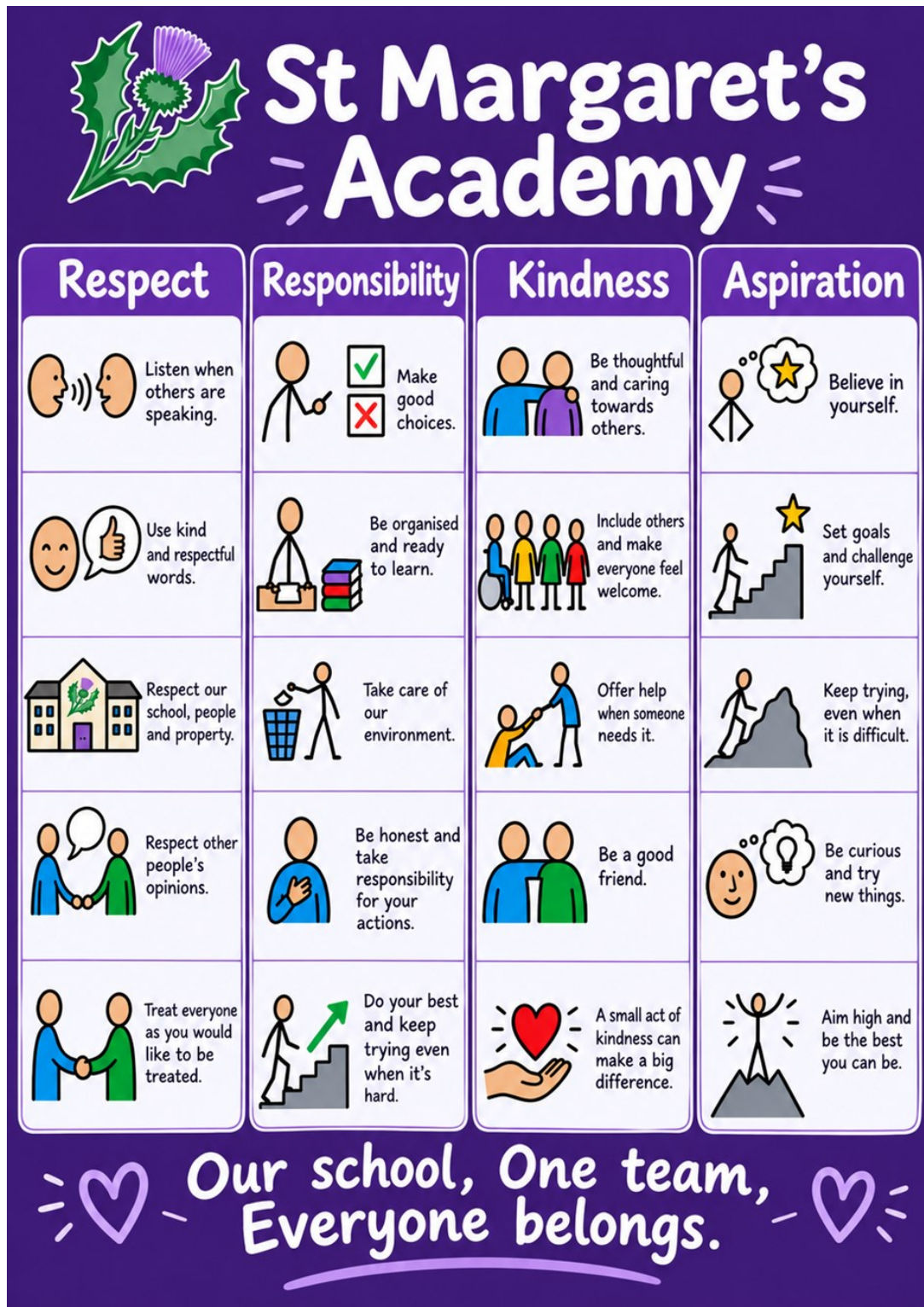


MOTIVATION

Exciting Events Ahead

We also have a number of exciting events coming up, including our school council launches, open days, wellbeing days, expanded enrichment clubs, the launch of the whole school Forest Skills and many other opportunities for children to get involved and make a positive contribution to school life.

This week, we have been revisiting our school values and are delighted to have introduced our new Widget-friendly Values Poster, which reflects our inclusive approach and helps make our values



It has been wonderful to see our pupils embracing these values so enthusiastically. Throughout the week, they have demonstrated kindness, respect and responsibility, supported one another, shown excellent manners and interactions, and continually aspired to do their very best, lots of Dojo's have been earnt.

We are incredibly proud of every child and the positive start they have made to the year.

School Council Launch 2026—2027

On Monday, 14th September in assembly, I will be talking to the children about school council roles and responsibilities. This is a fantastic opportunity for 'pupil voice' and for our children to take real ownership of school improvement, helping to make a positive difference for all members of our school community.



At St Margaret's Academy, we are committed to promoting the British Values, including democracy, respect and the importance of listening to one another. Our School Council plays a key role in bringing these values to life, ensuring that children's views are heard and that they have a genuine influence on decisions that affect school life.

Each class from Year 2 to Year 6 will elect two School Council representatives. These pupils will work together throughout the year to discuss ideas, gather feedback from their classmates and contribute to meaningful improvements across the school.

One of the key messages from our recent pupil survey was the desire for a wider range of clubs and enrichment opportunities. We have already begun introducing new activities, but we want our pupils to help shape what comes next. Through the School Council, children will have the opportunity to share what they would like to see, helping us create opportunities that best meet the interests of our school community.

If your child is in Year 2 to Year 6 and would like to stand for election as a School Council representative, please talk with them at home about what this important role involves. Next week, staff will discuss the responsibilities of being a representative with the children, and interested pupils will have the opportunity to put themselves forward for election.

The ballot will take place on Friday morning, with pupils voting for the representatives they feel will best represent their class. We will announce the successful candidates during Friday's assembly and share the full list of School Council representatives in next week's newsletter.

Parent Carer Survey Results Feedback (July 2026)

Thank you to all parents and carers who completed our survey. We are delighted that feedback shows significant improvements across many areas, particularly behaviour, personal development, SEND support, high expectations, and how concerns are addressed. Parents also told us that children are happy, safe, and achieving well at St Margaret's Academy.

Your feedback also highlighted the importance of clear communication about pupil progress and school developments. In response, we have strengthened our communication through newsletters, parent events, social media updates, and clearer reporting on children's progress. We will continue to work closely with families to build on these improvements and ensure every child thrives



ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



Road Safety and Considerate Parking

As we begin a new term at St Margaret's, we would like to remind all families of the importance of road safety around the school site. Please take a few moments to speak with your child about crossing roads safely, using designated crossing points where possible, stopping to look and listen, and checking carefully in both directions before crossing.

We have recently had a couple of near misses in the vicinity of the school and want to do everything we can to keep our young people safe. Your support in reinforcing these important messages at home is greatly appreciated.

We would also kindly ask all parents and carers to park considerately when dropping off or collecting children. Please be mindful of our neighbours by avoiding blocking driveways, parking across access points, or causing obstruction on surrounding roads. Working together and showing courtesy to our local community helps ensure a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our children safe and respecting our neighbours.



PTA Update

Following the recent PTA meeting on Thursday evening at 7:00pm, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to Felicity, Laura and Chloe for their incredible support, commitment and hard work over the past five years. As many of their children have now moved on, they feel it is the right time to hand over to a new generation of PTA members. On behalf of the entire school community, we thank them for everything they have done and wish them all the very best for the future.



We are now excited to begin the next chapter and relaunch our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at St Margaret's Academy. The PTA plays a vital role in strengthening partnerships between families and the school, enriching pupils' experiences and creating those special moments that bring joy, excitement and lasting memories for our children.

We would warmly welcome volunteers from across our school community, whether you are a parent, carer or family member, who would like to help shape and contribute to the future of our PTA. Together, we can continue the fantastic work of previous committees while developing new ideas, events and opportunities for our pupils and families.

Our vision is simple: we want every child at St Margaret's Academy to have the very best experience possible. We want to enrich learning, provide the fun factor, create memorable experiences and ensure there are plenty of magical moments that make our children smile.

To help us arrange the AGM, please complete the short Google Form below asking for your preferred day, time and venue for meetings. We would be grateful if you could complete the form by Friday 18th September. Once responses have been received, we will arrange the most suitable date and invite everyone to attend.

I would also like to thank the parents who have already contacted the school following Thursday's meeting. Although they were unable to attend, they have expressed a genuine interest in becoming involved, and we are extremely grateful for their enthusiasm and support.

We are looking forward to forming together a new PTA team and continuing the excellent work of previous committees while planning exciting events, fundraising opportunities and community activities for the benefit of all our children. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can make St Margaret's Academy an even more special place for our pupils and families.

AGM Form - <https://forms.gle/AkqhGYxzFsYjtz3P8>



Save The Date: Hello Yellow Day 2026

On Friday 9th October, St Margaret's Academy will be turning yellow as we join schools across the country in supporting Hello Yellow Day, raising awareness and funds for YoungMinds, the UK's leading charity for young people's mental health.

At St Margaret's, we are passionate about helping every child to live happier, healthier lives. We believe that promoting positive mental health is just as important as supporting academic success, and we work hard to ensure that every child feels valued, listened to and supported. Hello Yellow Day provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this commitment whilst encouraging important conversations about wellbeing and mental health.

This year is particularly exciting as one of the first initiatives led by our newly appointed School Counsellors. Working alongside pupils, they will help create a day that is engaging, meaningful and fun, whilst ensuring that the important message of mental health awareness remains at its heart.

What will we be doing?

-  Wearing something yellow to school
-  Taking part in a special assembly focused on mental health awareness and reminding children that help and support are always available
-  Launching our exciting plans for pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors, empowering children to look out for one another and encourage positive conversations about wellbeing
-  Participating in pupil-led activities designed to raise awareness, spread positivity and support this fantastic cause

Once the School Councillors are in post they will be helping to shape the day and share their ideas, so watch this space for more exciting details!

How can you help?

If you have family members, friends or local businesses who would like to support this wonderful cause, we would be incredibly grateful for any donations. Children are also welcome to bring a voluntary donation (suggested minimum £1) on the day.

Please support our fundraising efforts by visiting:

 <https://fundraise.youngminds.org.uk/fundraisers/emmahollis/hello-yellow>

Every pound raised helps YoungMinds continue providing vital support to young people when they need it most.

Support for Parents and Carers

Most importantly, we want our families to know that support is available whenever it is needed. YoungMinds offers a range of excellent resources for parents and carers, including:

- Online advice and resources: www.youngminds.org.uk/parent
- Parents' Helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Open 9.30am to 4.00pm)
- Online webchat and email support: www.youngminds.org.uk/parentshelpline

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Together, we can help raise awareness, start important conversations and show our children that looking after our mental health matters.

Save the date: Friday 9th October. Let's make St Margaret's shine yellow!



Take care everyone and 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.

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.

Diary Dates

14th September 2026	Hawthorn Swimming School Council Assembly 15.30—16.00 Welcome Class Meetings Y1 & Y4
15th September 2026	15.30—16.00 Welcome Class Meetings Reception & Y3
18th September 2026	School Council Ballot
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

ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



Reception	Olivia	Kindness towards others and always the first to help her friends
Reception	Joel	Showing being a kind friend and showing a good learning attitude
Year 1	Myka	For having a lovely welcoming attitude to the new children
Year 1	Robyn	Robyn has impressed us by being ready to learn and starting to join in with our class routines. Well done Robyn!
Apple	Myla	Our first star in Apple is Myla. She has impressed so many adults in Year 2 with her responsible and aspirational attitude to the start of the year. Myla has took everything in her stride and with a huge smile. Well done Myla!
Oak	Violet	You have been coming into school each morning ready to learn and showing a positive attitude. You are also becoming more independent and taking greater responsibility for yourself. Keep up the fantastic work!
Willow	Bella	For settling into Year 3 brilliantly and showing an aspirational attitude towards her learning. She has been trying her best and is approaching new Year 3 challenges with enthusiasm. Well done Bella!
Holly	George W	George has had an amazing start to year 3, showing responsibility and aspiration in his learning. He has amazed us with his super maths thinking, which he loved sharing with the class. Well done George, you are a star!
Cherry	Dolly	What a great start to Year 4. Dolly shows all the school values and is a great example to everyone. Well done!
Hazel	Ethan	Ethan is Hazel's star this week for his excellent responsibility and aspiration. He has settled beautifully into our class and we are so impressed with his attitude to his work. Keep it up, Ethan!
Rowan	Corey	Corey is the star of the week in Rowan class. He has been amazing all week. He has joined in with lessons making lots of valuable contributions and completed all of his learning tasks. Well done Corey. What a super start to Year 5!
Birch	Flynn	Flynn thoroughly deserves our first star of the week as he is such a good role model to others. He demonstrates all of our school values all of the time and he has been particularly aspirational this week, putting his hand up to join in regularly. What a great start to the year Flynn!
Hawthorn	Guy	Guy has shown great responsibility for his learning this week and has tried very hard with his independent work, particularly in maths. Well done, Guy - a terrific start to Year 6!
Maple	Noah	Noah is our star of the week. He has shown his aspiration and responsibility in his work - always ready to learn. He is respectful in the classroom and has shown kindness this week to his friends. Well done Noah, keep it up!

