

Friday 24th February 2023



Dear Parent/Carer

Parental Update 113

A warm welcome to the first *Update* of a new half-term. In our Assemblies this week we've been looking at the idea of rest and relaxation (part of our series on the Ten Commandments – we've got to the fourth commandment about "*Remember the Sabbath*"...), so I hope that you and your family were able to enjoy some down-time last week!

I'm writing this having just returned from a beautiful service at St Anne's church, next door to us here at St Margaret's. The service was to remember the life of brave Tom Adams, one of our Year 9 students, who sadly lost his battle with cancer last term. Several Year 9 students spoke movingly about their memories of Tom, our school choir sang "*You'll never walk alone*", and Pastor Bill Bygroves (Chaplain at Liverpool Football Club and a long-time friend of St Margaret's) spoke powerfully about the Hope Christians can know, even in the face of death. Bill pointed out that the letters of H-O-P-E could stand for **He Offers Peace Eternally** – a message for all of us in these difficult times. Do please continue to uphold Tom's parents and brothers in your thoughts and, if you pray, in your prayers.

Welcome!

I'm delighted to be able to let you know that next week we'll be welcoming Mrs Lisa Keeton to our staff. She'll be joining us as an administrator with our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team, adding further capacity there – and she will also assume duties as our Medications Officer. She will therefore be an important point of contact for any parents whose students have medical needs. Her e-mail address, lkeeton@stmargaretsacademy.com, will 'go live' shortly.

NEU Industrial Action

As you may be aware, members of the National Education Union will be taking strike action on Tuesday 28th February. As usual, we have conducted a risk assessment to determine whether it would be safe for St Margaret's to open to students given the number of teachers who are likely to take part in strike action. Following on from that, I regret to advise you that **St Margaret's will be closed to most students on Tuesday 28th February**. The exceptions to this are as follows:

- We will remain open for Year 9 students. This is because the number of Year 9 lessons affected by teachers who are likely to take strike action is significantly less than the number of such lessons in other year-groups – it's simply how the timetable has panned out that day.
- As last time, we will remain open for Sixth Form students. This is because we can ask post-16 students to study independently if their teacher is not in school for a lesson; we cannot ask pre-16 students to do this. Sixth Form lessons will take place as usual where teachers are in school.

- We will also remain open for vulnerable students in Years 7, 8, 10 and 11. We define vulnerable students to be:
 - Looked After Children;
 - students with an allocated social worker; and
 - students with an EHCP.

We will assume that students in these categories who attended school on the first strike day (Wednesday 1st February) will attend school again; if they do not wish to do so, please let us know. We will also assume that students in these categories who did not attend school earlier this month will also not attend school on Tuesday, although again if this is wrong (and you do wish them to attend), please let us know.

We will endeavour to set work on Class Charts for students who are at home if their normal classroom teacher is able to do so. If this does not happen, we would strongly encourage all students to engage with the excellent resources online at Oak National Academy, available [here](#).

Students who are entitled to Free School Meals can claim a supermarket voucher to cover the cost of a meal on strike day. Please e-mail mdarcy@stmargaretsacademy.com for more details.

I am sorry for any inconvenience this partial closure may cause you. Currently, two more strike days are planned, on Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th March. We will review our arrangements for these days nearer the time and it is likely we will be open for different pre-16 year-group(s) on these days.

Chess tournament

Thanks in no small part to the dedication of Mr Martin, chess is undergoing a bit of a renaissance at St Margaret's at the moment! Members of our thriving Chess Club took part in the Merseyside Chess Congress at North Liverpool Academy earlier this week, and acquitted themselves very creditably despite competing against students who were, in some cases, two or three years older than them. Every St Margaret's player contributed to the team results at some point in the day, and one of our A-team players won an award for being the best newcomer (winning praise for his tactics from an International Master who was there).



A huge well done to all concerned!

Finally...

Having looked at the Sabbath day in our Assemblies this week I wish you and your family a truly restful weekend. Hopefully I'm not tempting fate by describing it as an 'early spring' weekend...!

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Stephen Brierley'.

Stephen Brierley
Principal.