



West Lothian
Council



St Margaret's Academy
Howden South Road
Livingston
EH54 6AT
Tel. 01506 497104
Fax. 01506 497103

Email: stmargarets.ac@wled.org.uk
Internet: www.stmargaretsacademy.org.uk

Head Teacher
James Cameron

February 2007

Dear Parent

This is my first newsletter as the new Headteacher of St Margaret's Academy. I was delighted to take up my post on 8 January as successor to Mr Sweeney who is now Head of Schools in West Lothian. As the last edition of the 'St Margaret's Academy News' headlined St Margaret's as a 'good and improving school' I am privileged to lead a great team of staff and a strong school community to continue our journey to excellence.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS: It is my intention to publish a brief newsletter such as this on a regular basis with at least two a term. The main purpose will be to keep parents informed of new developments and the work of the school. In addition we shall continue to publish, twice a year, the high quality Newspaper which will focus on pupil achievements and a celebration of our success as a school community.

We are re-launching the website next week at a new address. It can now be found at www.stmargaretsacademy.org.uk. The website will be updated on a regular basis and this newsletter will be one of the first new items. As the website grows I hope it will be a useful resource for parents and pupils.

SUPPORTED STUDY: Our supported study programme is now in full swing. I am grateful for the contribution of staff to an expanded programme this term. I appreciate that it can be a long day for pupils when they attend an additional class therefore a bottle of water and a healthy snack will now be provided. Additionally any pupil who requires to travel home by public transport will now be able to be re-imbursed.

An important element in supporting study is the Easter Revision School. I am pleased that we will be able to provide a programme of revision for S4-S6 students across the full range of subjects. The programme will run for 5 days within the period 2-13 April. Full details will be issued through the students shortly.

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOL: Thank you to parents who responded to our sample questionnaire as we embark on achieving full 'Health Promoting School' status. The majority of responses were very positive about the school's efforts in the wider concept of 'health' promotion but I recognize that we can do more to keep parents informed and involved in this area. Next term we will organise an Information Evening on the health and wellbeing aspects of the school curriculum with workshops on our Anti-Bullying Policy, Health Promotion, Moral and Sex Education and the important area of developing 'effective contributors' through our Citizenship programme. More details in the next newsletter.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK: Continuing the theme of citizenship, our first Global Citizenship week takes place this month from 19-23 February. The main aims of the week are to raise awareness of different cultures and developing world issues as well as promoting racial equality. During the week all departments will undertake an activity that focuses on Global Citizenship. We shall have visiting speakers from SCIAF, Traidcraft, Jubilee Scotland, Amnesty and Water Aid. All pupils and staff will contribute to our fundraising through one of three activities:-

- purchasing a 'RESPECT' wristband
- purchasing our own Global Citizenship tee-shirt which can be worn to school on 23 February
- collecting 500 pennies in an empty 500ml water bottle

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ACT: You may be aware that this Act comes into force this year. One aspect of the legislation is the replacement of School Boards by Parent Councils drawn from a Parents Forum of all parents. The School Board is currently considering how to handle the transition to take effect in August this year. I know the School Board will be contacting parents directly and organizing an open meeting of all parents. We have been well served by our School Board and it is vital that we have as strong a representation as possible in the future Parent Council. There will be much more publicity regarding the change and I am sure that you appreciate that a strong and vibrant parent body is necessary for the continued success of the school.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK: I was able to speak on the theme of parental involvement at St Andrew's and St Theresa's Parishes on Education Sunday and I will shortly be speaking at the other parishes that the school serves. We have established a Chaplaincy Support Team in the school and work is well underway in re-invigorating the prayer and liturgical life of the school. I am grateful for the support of the local clergy in assisting us in strengthening the home-school-parish links. Mass will be celebrated in the Oratory at lunchtime several days a week during the Lenten season.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE: It is an exciting and challenging time for Scottish Education and St Margaret's Academy is well prepared to respond to the national curriculum reviews and to play our part in developing 'successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'. We are currently reviewing our arrangements to ensure that we can best meet some of the principles of an excellent curriculum, retaining breadth and balance to but also making greater provision for choice to ensure better progression and challenge. Some of the decisions we will be taking will inevitably have an effect on the timetable for next session. I will keep you fully informed to ensure that parents are consulted alongside staff and pupils. A special 'Curriculum for Excellence' newsletter will be issued in the spring with our proposals for change.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE: Thank you for your continued support for the pupils' dress code. In conjunction with the School Board there will be consultation on the dress code in the near future. There are no proposals for major change to the code but rather to update it and where possible reduce the costs. I am conscious that there has been a growth in the number of pupils wearing black tops as opposed to the school sweatshirt so therefore from next session a school v-necked black top with the school logo will be available in addition to the sweatshirt. This arrangement will avoid the fragmentation of our dress code into a variety of styles of dress. I am currently consulting the fourth and fifth year students on their dress code for next session when they become our senior fifth and sixth year. I am heartened that during my discussions with pupils and parents there is a strong desire to maintain the school uniform.

We shall issue order forms for school uniform with the new prices and styles in good time. The PE kit will also be available for purchase through the school once again.

James Cameron