



Weekly News 1st February 2019



From the Head

Dear parents,

I am sure that last weekend many parents within our school community will have read with horror The Sunday Times investigation into how a teenage girl was sent emails and images of self-harm by the virtual scrapbook site, Pinterest, in the weeks before and after her tragic death by suicide. These messages were not sent by spiteful individuals but were generated as a result of the algorithms which govern the site. I was pleased to hear that the health secretary has written to technology companies including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Apple and Google telling them to remove disturbing material or face legislation. As a wholehearted supporter of the benefits of technology, closer regulation of the content of the social media which appears to have become the lifeblood of many young people is, in my view, long overdue.

As teachers and parents we also have a vital role to play in educating our young people to use social media in a way that is constructive and life enhancing for them and for others. Be assured that we regularly review our curriculum in this area and grasp every opportunity to engage with national experts and initiatives. However, it is only parents who can make decisions and monitor how and when their daughters' mobile phones are used out of school. At St Margaret's we want to support parents to make the right decisions with and for their own children about mobile phone use.

To this end, I would like to remind you that we have been able to secure input from the NSPCC who will be leading our 'Find Out Friday' event on the topic of 'keeping your family safe online' in the GP Room on Friday 8th February between 2.10pm and 3pm. The talk will cover the current trends in apps, how they are being used by young people and their suitability for different age groups. I strongly recommend this talk to parents of pupils of all ages. Please do let my PA, Karen Schmitz (ka.schmitz@st-margaret.aberdeen.sch.uk) know if you will be coming along and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Before I came to St Margaret's I lived with teenage girls in school boarding houses so I do understand how difficult it can be to get the balance right between monitoring children's social media use and giving them responsibility to grow and learn through the experience. I don't have children of my own, so these days I'm not having that conversation on a nightly basis as I once did, but I do care deeply about your children and I believe it is vital that schools and parents continue to work together on this issue.

Anna Tomlinson



PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION *fun*raising + *fund*raising



We're excited to invite you to the first PTA event of this term - Spring Afternoon Tea to be held in the function suite of the Park Cafe, Hazelhead Park AB15 8BJ on **Sunday 17th March** from 1 - 4pm. A number of side stalls are planned to accompany the main event –

AFTERNOON TEA

Freshly cut sandwiches
A selection of savoury pastries
Freshly baked plain & fruit scones
Served with clotted cream & strawberry jam
A selection of sweet treats & cakes
Tea, coffee or squash

Gluten free available on request
There will be a bar for those wishing to purchase additional / alcoholic / soft drinks



Tickets are £20 each, to be purchased in advance by Thur 7th March. Please return the slip below with cash / cheque made payable to 'St Margaret's Parents Association' to school for attention of the 'PTA' - Tickets will be sent electronically. Alternatively, tickets can be bought from the school office.

Everyone in the school community is welcome - girls, parents, family members, staff and former pupils - numbers are limited to 80 so don't delay in purchasing your tickets!

Spring Afternoon Tea Tickets (will be sent electronically)

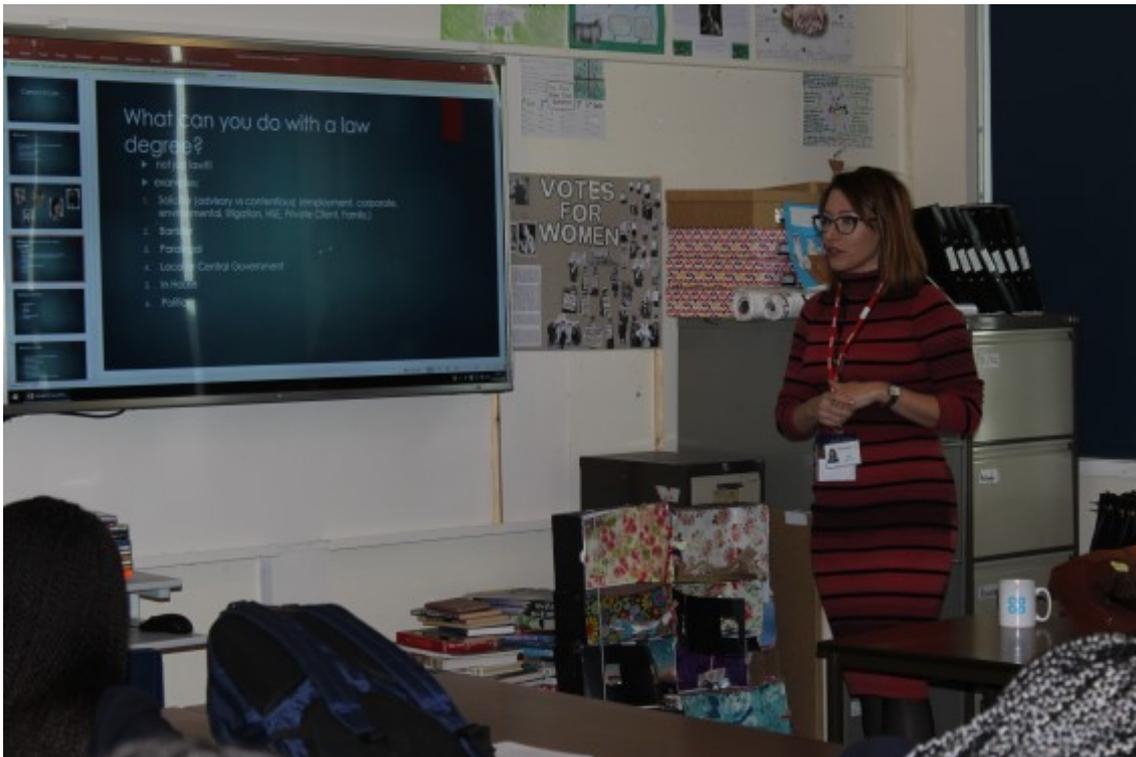
Name _____ Mobile No. _____

Total tickets requested _____ Value of cash/cheque enclosed _____

Number of Gluten free tickets required _____ *To be returned to school for attention of 'PTA'*

On Monday 29th January, Mrs Donachie, a lawyer with Petrofac and mother to two daughters at St Margaret's, took time out of her busy day to speak to us all about her career in law. Her presentation was very interesting and informative. She taught us about working as a lawyer in the real world and highlighted the pros and cons of working in a male dominated environment. She made it clear to all of us that with hard work and determination women can reach prominent positions of responsibility within law. She talked about inspirational women figures in politics/ and law and told us to aim high in our careers. Furthermore, she made the talk humorous, and told us about the various careers we could do with a law degree, and explained what she has to do on a daily basis. Mrs Donachie's talk was incredibly interesting and we would like to thank her very much for giving up her time to come and speak to us.

Jewel Jacob, IVM



Next week's talk is from Sergeant Clare Stoddart and Flight Lieutenant Richard Stinson from the RAF. All girls in senior school are welcome and should come to class S3 at 1:00pm.

If you would like to volunteer to give a talk in school, please do get in touch with Ms Brown at s.brown@st-margaret.aberdeen.sch.uk

Ms S. Brown

Congratulations to Anna in 7 Junior who qualified for the Scottish Schools swimming championships in Glasgow last weekend. Anna competed against the top swimmers in Scotland for her age group (12 and under) in the 50m butterfly event and achieved a personal best time. Well done, Anna!

Mrs K. Norval



OUR ABERDEEN BRANCH IS MOVING...

Our '**Aitken & Niven**' store in Bridge Street is closing on Saturday 2nd February and we will be moving to a brand new '**Stevensons**' shop in town on Monday 4th February.

NEW SHOP ADDRESS:

Stevensons, 429 Union Street,
Aberdeen, AB10 ITR

Tel: 01224 595190

Email: aberdeenbranch@stevensons.co.uk

OPENING HOURS:

Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 5.30pm
Sunday - CLOSED

We offer the opportunity to purchase school uniform and sportswear year-round, through multiple different channels.

You can always buy with confidence, knowing that you can take advantage of our unrivalled 120 day returns policy to exchange unused items, if a child has a sudden growth spurt before starting school.

In store

Fully trained Sales Advisors will be able to help with all your uniform and sportswear requirements.

Appointments

Alternatively, you can book a one-to-one appointment on-line, ideal for busy parents who want to avoid the crowds and have a guaranteed fitting time in-store. Shop opening times are also extended during the busy summer months.

Online

It's easy to shop at **www.stevensons.co.uk** with low cost postage and packing and FREE returns. Once registered, you are able to download the most up-to-date uniform price lists for a school and browse by year group to know exactly what items are relevant.

Our award winning website has been developed with parents in mind, so that purchasing is a quick and hassle free process. We also offer a FREE 'Click and Collect' service for customers who wish to order online and collect in store.

By phone

You can order by phone or just call for advice on your school's uniform.

Contact our friendly store based Customer Service Team on 01224 595190. During the busy summer period our phone lines are open longer hours.



For more information about us visit
www.stevensons.co.uk

STEVENSONS

SCHOOL UNIFORM OUTFITTERS

Aitken & Niven

QUALITY IN THE MAKING SINCE 1905

We've created a **free online safety guide for schools to share with parents and carers about Grand Theft Auto (GTA)**; the 18+ rated game in which sex, violence, profane language and nudity form the main themes of the game. Popular for its criminal narrative, the GTA series encourages users to break the law in order to succeed and progress through the game.

With over 100 million users on the game's online social club alone, Grand Theft Auto is hugely popular amongst young people under the age of 18!

Please visit the link below for further information:

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/platform-guides/grand-theft-auto-online-safety-guide-for-parents/?mc_cid=b9f4c860b9&mc_eid=6ceabe12b2



AGE RESTRICTION 18+

What parents need to know about GRAND THEFT AUTO (GTA)

Grand Theft Auto is an action adventure video game series where players control criminals and must have in order to complete missions and progress through the game. During the early stages of the game, it safely focuses on completing missions to go up a level. However, as the game goes more popular the makers of GTA decided to introduce a narrative to each edition of the game. The aim of this was to increase user engagement, making gamers believe that they were not just playing as the characters, but they became the characters. Grand Theft Auto is available on a number of devices including PlayStation and Xbox, desktop computers, PSP, Nintendo DS, and Mobile.

Top Tips for Parents

THE RISK - PLAYING WITH STRANGERS

When buying GTA if you automatically have access to Grand Theft Auto Online you will be able to play with other players in a game, or be invited in game "sessions" where people will be placed at random to play. When you first load into a game you are automatically placed into an open lobby, meaning you play with random people. The social club in GTA is very like social platforms where users can chat, share or game photographs (which users can like and comment on), and even message other users directly.

What parents can do

To prevent your child playing with strangers on the game, you can change the settings to ensure they only play with their approved friends list. Upon signing up to the social club, it automatically sets a player's visibility settings to lower than "everyone". Some and social information is made public. Parents can alter this by changing the visibility settings to "only me".

WARNING!

Due to the nature of the game and the age restrictions, GTA includes content that is inappropriate for anyone under the age of 18, including sex, nudity, violence, profane language, and substance abuse. These are the main components that make up the game - you have to do certain things and witness certain things in order to move on in the game. Exposing your child to this type of content could affect their morals and understanding of right and wrong. Additionally, your child could become desensitised to similar situations, reducing the fact they would find it hard to differentiate between right/wrong and good/bad.

THE RISK - ONLINE HACKERS

Hackers can steal money by helping users cheat in the game. They can do a number of inappropriate things including killing people, stealing weapons, spending money into the game, and even ripping other gamers. Spending money levels to be a game's most popular choice, being able to buy \$150,000,000,000 of in-game currency for as little as five US dollars.

What parents can do

Actively monitor your child's online activity. These websites are very easy to find, meaning children and young people can easily navigate their way to these websites and pay for hacks. Not only is this an illegal activity, but you have the risk of giving your personal information to someone who may misuse it.

THE RISK - ADDICTION

Additional to a risk with any game, game developers use persuasive design techniques to force users to spend their time, and often money, in a game. Within GTA, your character is able to progress through the game for completing missions within a certain time frame, encouraging children to keep returning to the game. Gaming addiction is now a recognised health condition and the side effects are concerning including sleep deprivation, decreased attention span and erratic, unkind behaviour.

What parents can do

There are a number of things you can do if you are concerned about your child's screen time, including setting time limits, taking breaks, especially during meal times and before bedtime. Talk to your child and ask why they are spending so much time on the game, and encourage healthy alternatives such as outdoor activities and spending quality time with friends and family.

THE RISK - LIVE CHAT

When playing GTA online, players have the option to use a microphone to broadcast their voice live to other players involved in the session. These live voice chats are not moderated, meaning anything could be said, including inappropriate language, as well as verbal forms of bullying.

What parents can do

Talk openly with your child about not giving away personal information. Also remind them that conversations can be recorded. This could damage their online reputation. Depending on the device/platform, there will be ways to mute conversations. Make yourself aware of the device/platform's individual settings and ensure that your child knows how to block and report.

THE RISK - MICROTRANSACTIONS

By completing missions and partaking in certain activities you earn in-game currency. This allows you to buy things such as prosthetics, vehicles, weapons, armour, rare outfits, cars, apartments and more. However, the items that are normally to buy often have a high price that requires a lot of game time, meaning the items are pretty unrealistic to buy.

What parents can do

If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but need to limit spending, an option is purchasing a pre-paid gift card for your child. These can be purchased in specific amounts which will allow you to limit how much your child spends and removes the need for a credit or debit card to be used with their account.

SOURCES:
<https://www.aveb.com/19to/12101186/parental-aid/>
<https://www.tellingtech.co.uk/gaming/news/grand-theft-auto-has-made-money-fine-history/>
<https://www.techaddict.torica/addiction-to-video-games.html>

National Online Safety
 A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com
 Email us at help@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 338 8367