



8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. As we reach the end of this half term I would like to thank you for all that you do to support your child in their education at Torquay Girls' Grammar School.

We are now approaching a very important stage for our Year 11 and Year 13 students. As the exams are approaching a number of lunchtime sessions are taking place to support their success. Furthermore, targeted mentoring is scheduled for after half term. At the other end of the school Year 8 have just completed their exams.

We have a wide range of lunchtime clubs ([click here](#)) on offer during the week. Please encourage your daughter to try a new club in the next half term.

## SPRINGWATCH AT TGGG

While we have all been shivering in the recent winter temperatures, the school site has started to come alive in anticipation of the coming warmer seasons. Our school is blessed to be custodian of both ancient trees and wild pockets of habitat. This provides us with a window on the changing seasons. Tawny owls are calling to establish breeding territories, greeting the early morning staff and students. Greater Spotted woodpeckers are drumming in the paddock and banks of Alexanders are pushing through frozen soil soon to give tiny insignificant yellow flowers for the first insects to feed on.



The school has two communities, we humans are going about our business totally unaware of the drama in the lives of our neighbours. Meanwhile the badger has been desperately searching outside the main entrance digging tufts of grass to find a protein packed worm. The robin confused by our lights, is singing well into the night. While we wrap up warm, they play the survival game.

2024 marks the start of a new partnership, the school is looking to embrace and celebrate our hidden creatures and plants. Students and staff will be invited to join in a range of projects to make our site more attractive to

wildlife, this not only benefits those who share our grounds but also us. You may not know the names of the things we see but who doesn't on a winter night look forward to the first butterfly, ladybird, or spring flower. A hint of the glorious summer on the beach to come.



Outstanding in all areas:  
Leadership and management  
The quality of education  
Behaviour and attitudes  
Personal development  
Sixth-form provision

## YEAR 9 SPEED CAREERS NETWORKING EVENT

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January, TGGs welcomed 21 employers from a wide variety of sectors such as construction, hospitality, law, conservation, engineering, and the NHS, to speak with our Year 9 students in a speed careers networking event. It was a fast and furious event as the students had 5 minutes with each employer finding out about their industry and potential careers within it.

With students currently deciding on their GCSE subjects the morning gave them the opportunity to find out from the employers what skills and knowledge they look for in their industry.

There was a real buzz around the room, feedback from both students and employers was overwhelmingly positive. Some students heard about careers they had not even considered and for others, the morning confirmed what they hope to pursue as a career in the future.

## ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION COMPETITION

Once again TGGs have taken to the stage for the second round of the ESU Public Speaking Competition held at Colyton Grammar School; and once again they have overwhelmingly proven their skill by securing, not one, but two places in the regional heats.

Competing against schools from Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, the girls delivered convincing speeches exploring whether *We should all just agree to disagree* as well as the perils of being *Too Obsessed with fashion*. The standard was superbly high from all the schools present and with only two teams able to progress to the regional finals, we knew we had to get a raise our skills and perform better than ever. Nervous energy was harnessed and turned to enthusiasm for compelling performances which were as powerful as they were entertaining; TGGs dominated as we took the only two spaces in the regional finals.

Huge congratulations to Isabella Passarelli, Eve Buckley, Isabella Shah, Rose Butler-Cole, Rosie Reed and Tallulah Kelly.

## YEAR 7 CHALLENGE DAY

Year 7 spent Challenge Day at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth with the Geography Department. They took part in an interactive workshop and learnt all about how coral reefs reproduce and the big threats they face. Students did experiments exploring ocean acidification and explored how climate change is impacting the coral reef ecosystem. They had a great day and were complimented on their exemplary behaviour by the aquarium staff who said they wouldn't be able to take 161 students in one go from many schools.



## YEAR 8 TORQUAY MUSEUM TRIP

On the 8th of January, 160 Year 8 students and 9 staff took the short coach journey to Torquay Museum. We had exclusive use of the space, and this made for a great experience.

A myriad of objects, artefacts and curiosities and so on were on display – perfect for aspiring art students to sketch from and take photographs of. There was also a very interesting and informative

LGBTQ+ discovery trail around the Museum of a diverse range of objects – the pupils simply had to scan a QR code next to the displayed object with their phones. This gave additional, very interesting and enlightening information. Scanning a QR code next to a portion of a shark's jaw led to the knowledge that sharks can reproduce asexually through a process called 'automatic parthenogenesis'!

The students responded fantastically to the challenges laid before them and behaved excellently throughout the day – the museum staff were very complimentary of the girls' behaviour and of the quality of sketching going on in all areas of the Museum.

There is now a dedicated Teams Page for students to upload any photographs of objects and views of the museum that they may have taken on the day – they have until February Half-Term and winners will be announced shortly thereafter.

In Art lessons, the pupils now have an extended period of time through to just after February Half-Term to put together a 'Visual Diary' in response to the trip.

### **YEAR 9 CHALLENGE DAY**

Year 9 recently participated in a "Problem Solving" Challenge Day delivered by colleagues from our regional universities. Students had the opportunity to find out about Thecodontosaurus (the Bristol Dinosaur) with the University of Bristol and how we can use fossils to interpret our landscape; they learnt about teamwork and Civil Engineering in the "Bridge Building" Challenge from the University of Plymouth, as well as learning how to deal with numbers (both very large and very small), again with the University of Plymouth. They learnt how to develop "Hazard Maps" for volcanoes with the University of the West of England (Bristol). Finally, they were able to find out the crucial role that Geoscience will play in sustainable development from the Camborne School of Mines (University of Exeter). We are extremely grateful that we have the opportunity to give our students access to lessons from university partners - an enriching experience for all.

### **CHALLENGES OF BEING A MUSLIM IN DEVON**

Year 12 Muslim students are visiting Year 9 Religion, Philosophy & Ethics classes to discuss the benefits and challenges of being a Muslim in Devon. These students helped Mrs Bloomfield to write the unit of work on Islam when they were in Year 9, focusing on topics that they thought would be interesting and beneficial for their peers to learn about.



### **PTA**

Last term we relaunched the PTA who hit the ground running by putting on a Quiz and Supper Night. The evening was very well supported and we had great feedback from the people attending. We would like to thank all the local businesses who donated amazing prizes for the raffle, and a special thanks to The Wine Box, Torquay for their generous donation of a Gin Making Session for 8 lucky winners. Contestants had a laugh while pitting their wits against each other, and in doing so raised £2,000 for school projects such as providing outdoor seating in recreational areas.

We are now looking at other events for students and parents and would welcome your suggestions. Of course, these events do take some planning and it would be great if we could recruit some more

helpers to join our team. We meet termly (and more often if needed for an event) and it has been a great opportunity to get to know new people.

If you would like to know more, please email: [swallwork@tggsacademy.org](mailto:swallwork@tggsacademy.org) for further information. You don't have to become a full member – we would also appreciate people offering to support at one-off events. All help is greatly appreciated and will enable us to offer a wider range of activities.

## **SECOND-HAND UNIFORM**

The PTA are hoping to offer periodic sales of pre-loved uniform. Ideally, we will do sales after school when the school is open for other purposes such as Information Evenings. Once dates are set we will circulate them to parents.

In the meantime, our stock has depleted so we would be extremely grateful if you could send in any unwanted/outgrown uniform. All donations can be handed into our Main Reception.

## **BON VOYAGE TO OUR SKIERS**

A group of staff and students will be heading out to Passo Tonale in the Italian Alps to enjoy some down time on the slopes this February Half Term. For many it will be a great opportunity to learn new skills of skiing and having a go at speaking the Italian language whilst enjoying and emerging themselves in the local culture.



A large dump of snow is being forecast at the end of this week which should make the conditions perfect for everyone.

Have a great time everyone.

Yours faithfully

**Ms Sarah Forster BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH**  
Headteacher and Accounting Officer  
Torquay Girls' Grammar School

## **KEY DATES NEXT HALF TERM:**

- Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Year 13 Mentoring Day.
- Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – National Allocation Day.
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Year 10 Exams start.
- Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – World Book Day.
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Year 12 depart for Geography fieldtrip to the Lake District.
- Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Year 12 UCAS trip, Westpoint.
- Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Gym & Dance Show.
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – Year 8 Parents' Evening.
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Last day of Spring Term & Mufti day.

Academic year 2024-2025 term dates can be found [here](#).