



Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year! As we say farewell to the festive cheer of Christmas, we welcome a fresh beginning with hope and optimism for the year ahead. However, this term also begins with the sad news that Maidwell Hall (local independent school) will be closing at the end of the academic year.

The reasons behind this decision are complex and include external pressures such as VAT changes, rising National Insurance contributions, and challenges faced by the independent school sector as a whole. Maidwell has also faced additional pressures, including difficulties in the international boarding market and other media factors. Our thoughts are especially with their 180 pupils now searching for new schools, and with the staff, many of whom live on-site, facing significant upheaval as they seek both new jobs and new homes.

While we are saddened by Maidwell's closure, I want to reassure you that St Peter's is in a very different position. Maidwell Hall has long operated as a predominantly boarding school for children up to 13, with 60 acres of land, a boating lake, and significant financial challenges, including a six-figure debt. By contrast, St Peter's is a financially secure, small, traditional independent day school, offering education for children up to 11. Our approach remains focused on providing an excellent, well-rounded education, supported by strong community ties and sound financial planning.

We understand the ripple effects that such closures can have. One or two of you may recall when St Peter's made the difficult decision in the 1990s to close Angus House, our secondary department. Decades later, those decisions are still remembered by the families and staff impacted at the time.

As always, St Peter's will offer support wherever we can. We extend a warm invitation to any local Maidwell families looking for a day school option, and we will continue to champion the values that bind independent schools together: quality education, strong pastoral care, and a commitment to nurturing every child's potential.

Five Amazing Years in Review

This week marks five years since I became Headteacher at St Peter's, and what an incredible journey it has been! That's nearly 1,000 school days filled with growth, challenge, and achievement.

We've faced two national lockdowns, navigated the challenges of COVID, and emerged stronger. The school has grown by 25%, and we've gone from 'Good' to 'Excellent in all areas' in our ISI inspection. Our presence has expanded online, with a new website, prospectus, and a social media following that has grown exponentially and now includes Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and even music streaming platforms!

Our curriculum has been enriched, and we've welcomed talented new teachers. We've also worked with multiple talented trainee teachers as we've become a partner school with the University. In Music

and Sport, we've reached new heights; regularly winning games championships, earning national recognition with our award-winning choirs, and becoming an integral part of the local community. Our trips program has expanded and we benefit from local and national trips on an almost weekly basis.

Awards have followed: the Rose of Northamptonshire, ISA National Finalist, Music Mark, Games Champions, and Level 4 RHS Horticultural Award. We've also invested in ICT, adding over 40 Google devices, and made significant changes to improve our facilities, including relocating our Preschool.

Our pupils' success is unmatched, with results consistently 10% above the national average in all areas. But what makes St Peter's truly exceptional is our spirit. We've strengthened our traditions, reinforced our House system, and upheld our ethos.

As our inspection noted: "Pupils are kind, respectful, and tolerant... Their moral understanding is strong... They are spiritually reflective and demonstrate excellent social skills, contributing generously to their school and local community."

As we navigate new challenges like VAT on school fees, our commitment, our Vision, remains unwavering. I'm proud of all we've achieved and excited for the future. Thank you for your support; together, we'll continue to make St Peter's extraordinary.

Clubs Start Next Week

Our after-school clubs begin next week, and it's always a challenge to organise such a wide range of activities for so many enthusiastic children! Thank you for your patience and understanding as we finalise arrangements.

Here are a few important updates:

- Study Skills Club: Unfortunately, this club didn't receive enough sign-ups and will not run this term. Children who were registered have been moved to Cooking and Crafts Club instead.
- Cooking and Crafts Club: Due to its overwhelming popularity, this club will now operate in rotating groups. Each child will take turns cooking and crafting on alternate weeks but the club is on every week.
- Lower School STEM Club: With such high demand, this club will now be split into STEM Club and Lego Club, alternating weekly with Mr Thomas and Miss Kirkman.
- Upper School Dance Club: This club currently has plenty of spaces available, but if numbers don't increase, it may not continue next term. Run by our dedicated Dance Teacher, Miss Chatwin, this club offers exceptional value at just £5 per session. It runs from 4.20pm–5.20pm, following "normal" club hours, making it a great alternative to Late Club. Open to all children from Year 3 upwards, this term's routine is inspired by Wicked!

If your child would like to join Upper School Dance Club, please let the School Office know as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support in making our after-school programme such a success!

Year 6 London Trip

Year 6 had an extraordinary day in London, packed with history, politics, and exclusive experiences. Traveling by tube, the children explored the Houses of Parliament, where they grilled the local MP and stepped into the House of Lords, witnessing democracy in action. After sightseeing and lunch in Parliament Square, the day reached a thrilling high with a visit to Number 1 Horse Guards (HM Treasury), thanks to the incredible Ms Collier. This top-secret tour included Churchill's former quarters, a James Bond filming location, and even a visit to the Chancellor's Office. A personal highlight was standing in the room where Victory in Europe was announced, a moment of immense historical significance. We hope this visit leaves a lasting impression on the children, inspiring them to one day tell their own children, "I've been in there!" A huge thank you to everyone who made this unforgettable trip possible.

Shrek-tacular Experience

A huge thank you to the talented team from Rutland Musical Theatre who visited us today to deliver an inspiring musical theatre workshop. The children had a fantastic time learning choreography from the show. A particular highlight was working alongside some of the cast, from the upcoming Easter performance of Shrek: The Musical at the Core at Corby Cube. This unforgettable experience offered our pupils a glimpse into the world of professional theatre, igniting creativity and building confidence. We are incredibly grateful for this amazing opportunity!

Key Dates for Your Diary

Please note the addition of Share Your Work on Monday 3rd February

- Year 5 Class Assembly - Monday 13th January
- Year 6 Class Assembly - Monday 3rd February
- **Preschool to Year 6 Share Your Work - Monday 3rd February**
- Half Term - Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February
- Year 4 Class Assembly - Monday 4th March
- World Book Day - Thursday 6th March
- Year 1 Class Assembly - Monday 17th March
- Red Nose Day - Friday 21st March
- Year 3 Class Assembly - Monday 23rd March
- Lent House Matches - Wednesday 26th March
- Last Day of Lent Term - Wednesday 2nd April

I know that we have many exciting things planned for the children; there will be more dates to be added to your diaries I'm sure! We are looking forward to welcoming Year 5 parents to their class assembly on Monday and are also delighted to welcome Miss Moody to our Upper School teaching team.

Miss Moody joins us from Northampton University for her final teaching placement and will be with us for the entire term. She will be based in Year 4 with Mr Day and will have the opportunity to immerse

herself in the St Peter's community. We are fortunate to have four qualified teaching mentors in school, enabling us to support and train the teachers of tomorrow while also benefiting from their fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Miss Moody brings a passion for Drama, and we're excited to announce that she will be leading Drama Club next term. We also extend a warm welcome to several new families joining St Peter's this week. Despite the chilly weather, we hope you've all had the chance to make them feel part of our wonderfully warm school community. Have a great weekend.

Regards,

Mr Thomas

Headteacher

Here is next week's menu: <https://www.st-peters.org.uk/men>