



No such thing as a free trial

By Janet Maitland

There's been a big increase in the number of victims signing up for 'free' trials of pharmaceuticals or supplements that turn out to be anything but free.

The scam involves a text message or web pop-up advertising a free trial of products such as diet pills. Customers are told they only have to pay for postage and packaging (P&P), but when they enter their payment details, they are actually signing up for a continuous payment authority (CPA). That allows money to be withdrawn from their account every month after the trial period, usually 14 days, has ended.

The terms and conditions, if there are any, are buried in the small print, so many customers don't realise they've agreed to a CPA until they check their statements.

One man who signed up for a free trial of health supplements found that the company had tried to take £94 from his

account after he'd used his debit card to pay the £2.99 P&P.

What to do

If you discover you've been duped, Moneywise advises you to contact the company to explain that you weren't told about the monthly payments.

The next step is to tell your bank to stop the CPA. Moneywise say: "The Financial Conduct Authority has confirmed that when you ask your bank to stop a CPA, the agreement must be cancelled and if another payment goes through by mistake, the money must be refunded. If your bank doesn't resolve the issue, then speak to the Financial Ombudsman."

For more information go to www.actionfraud.police.uk or www.moneywise.co.uk/scams-rip-offs



Aiming high: Rebecca Bakar and pupils at Martin Primary

Head start at Martin Primary

By Rachel Ellis

Headteacher Rebecca Bakar is promising to 'aim

high for all her pupils' as she takes over at Martin Primary School.

Mrs Bakar, who has 35 years' teaching experience and has worked at the school for seven years, says getting the basics right in reading, writing and maths is her priority for the 565 pupils at the East Finchley school.

This will be achieved, she says, through a wide, creative curriculum that uses the excellent facilities available at the school including a large school field, science garden, school library and dedicated music room.

Aiming high

"We are having a big push on reading and have spent a lot of money training teaching assistants in a new one-to-one reading programme to help foster children's reading skills and their love of reading.

"At the heart of an outstanding school is getting the fundamentals of reading, writing and maths right, but that needs to be done through a broad and stimulating curriculum. I want the best outcomes for all the children, not just academically but by

fostering their creativity too so that each develops as a whole person. I'll be aiming high in everything we do."

Available and involved

Mrs Bakar, 57, an East Finchley resident for the last 15 years, whose two sons both attended Christ's College Finchley, became head of Martin Primary in September following the departure of Helen Morrison to work in Barnet Council's education team.

Maintaining the school's strong community links and being hands-on and accessible to both parents and pupils are key, she says.

The school has revamped its website over the summer to provide more information to parents. Mrs Bakar will be at the school gates daily, host coffee mornings for parents once every three weeks and is spending one day a week teaching children in Year 6 and Year 2 as well as running a maths club for Year 6.

"I'm also having school dinners with the children a couple of times a week so I get the chance to talk to them in a more informal way. I think that's important," she says.

Hospice nurses walk to remember

Nurses at The Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead, tackled a 10km walk this summer to remember those they have cared for, and invited others to join them. The Walk to Remember event took place on 1 August at Osterley Park, in south-west London.

Its 10km route took walkers past colourful formal gardens and lakes, through woodland and across the ancient meadow, bursting with wildflowers and butterflies. After completing the walk, participants enjoyed live music, entertainment and fireworks.

Leonie Christian, who has been caring for people at the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead, for 25 years, said: "Every day we care for people facing terminal illness, and support their families. This walk was a wonderful opportunity for us to remember these people, and to raise money so the hospice can continue to provide care for many, many more."



Comfy shoes: Hospice nurse Leonie Christian.

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