

More News 6th Spetember 2024

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Newsletter



Welcome back!

It has been lovely to see all the children return to school looking happy in their learning and so smart in their uniform!

The children have returned to school beautifully - they have shown how ready they are to get straight down to learning and have been very charming in the conversations they have had.

Get Well Soon, Fr Simon!

Unfortunately, Fr Simon has injured his shoulder in a fall and is out of action for the next few weeks. I am sure you will join me in wishing him a speedy and full recovery.

While children are unable to attend Mass during the school week at the moment, we are making sure that prayer life in school is as rich as possible.

Sacraments will continue to go ahead, however Sacramental Preparation involving parents (e.g. meetings) will be a little delayed. Children will continue to follow their Sacramental Preparation journeys in school as usual. We will send information out to relevant parents regarding any meetings as soon as we have confirmation of dates and timings etc.

Please support the parish afternoon tea!



Holy Cross Catholic MAC Feast Day

We are looking forward to hosting a significant part of the Holy Cross Catholic Feast Day celebrations on Friday 13th September.

As part of the Feast Day celebrations, children from across the Holy Cross Catholic MAC in Y3 will be visiting the Cathedral and either the Transport Museum or the Herbert Art Gallery. Children from across the MAC in Y6 will be enjoying a retreat day in our school. These events have been designed to complement the sacramental preparation in Y3 and Y6. Please note all children will enjoy these activities, not just those intending to receive the sacraments.

All STM children (up to Y5) will enjoy either an outdoor picnic or an indoor picnic (the catering team will continue to offer school dinners, with children taking them to the picnic in take-away boxes) and all MAC Y6s, including our own STM Y6s, will eat together in the hall.



Meet the Teacher and Early Reading Meetings

Next Wednesday (11th September), we will be hosting our 'Meet The Teacher' evenings for parents of children in Ys1-6. This is an opportunity for you to meet your child's new class teacher, find out about the content and style of learning for the year and ask any questions you might have.

The meetings will take place at the following times:

5-5.30pm: Y1 and Y4

5.30-6pm: Y2 and Y5

6-6.30pm: Y3 and Y6 and Early Reading Information evening (see below)

Mrs Grant will also be running an Early Reading information evening for parents of children in Nursery and Reception that will explain how reading skills are taught at the start of your child's school journey and how you can support their reading as parents and carers. This will take place at 6-6.30pm.

There is no need to book for any of these sessions - just come along to the main entrance and you will be directed to the right classroom.

Congratulations Reception Children (from last year)

In the summer term the children in the current Year 1 class were invited to take part in an art competition organised by Young writers. They were challenged to get creative and produce a drawing entitled, 'Me and My Family'. This week we received the amazing news that **ALL** of the entries from our school have been selected to feature in a book of artwork by children from all over the country! 'Me and My Family', the book, will be published in November and a free copy will be arriving in school shortly afterwards.

Well done to all the children who took part: you will be receiving a very special certificate in assembly next week and have the opportunity to order a book to have at home.

- Cara
- Evie
- Clara
- Leon
- Caitlyn
- Jude
- Audrey
- Georgia
- Isaac
- Parker
- Felicity

Increased Security

The work on the gates to the main office is now finished. This means the school has increased security. The gates are opened at the beginning and end of the day during times of 'high traffic' but will remain secured at all other times.

To access the school office during school hours, please press the green bell button on the keypad next to the gates and a member of the Admin Team will support. To collect Care Club children, you will need to use the gate in the Watercall Avenue car park and press the bell button. If there are other parents waiting to enter at the same time, please ensure the member of staff you speak to is aware of this. Please do not let other people in through the closed gates without letting school staff know you are doing this, e.g. 'There are some other parents here too. Can I let them in with me?'

To get out through the gates to leave, please press the nearby round green button. The gates will release to allow you to leave. Please do not dawdle as this is on a timer system.

Children Arriving Late

We strongly encourage you to ensure your child arrives before the gates close at 8.50am. This enables them to have a smooth start to the school day and helps children to settle quickly. However, we know that sometimes there are inevitable delays when traffic is bad, etc.

Please remember it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child has arrived safely in school. Please escort your child to the office and do not leave them on the road/in the car park to make their own way as they may not be able to navigate the new gates by themselves.

PE Changes

You will have read on the email sent out at the start of the week that each class only has one allocated PE day this year. We are reviewing the curriculum offer and are seeking to enhance the general curriculum and the PE curriculum. This means your child will still receive two hours of PE but some of it will be take place at different points across the week (without the need for a full PE kit) so your children receive more consistent PE that also supports with day to day mental health and well being. There will be times during the year (different for different year groups) when other PE learning and additional physical activity is added into the curriculum (there will be other curriculum enhancements at different points for different subjects too) to enhance the PE offer further. More details of these will be shared with individual year groups closer to these times.

As with any new initiative, we will continue to review and refine any changes.

Going to the Toilet During Lessons

We are aware there has been quite a lot of discussion regarding the school's policy on allowing children to go the toilet during lessons on parent Whatsapp groups.

If you have any questions regarding this, please speak to your child's class teacher to be sure of getting accurate information, however, as a general guide, at STM:

- we encourage children to go to the toilet during lunch and playtimes to minimise the need to go during lessons
- children can ask to go to the toilet at any time and will usually be allowed to do so

- if a teacher is explaining important information, they may ask a child if they can wait until the explanation has finished (so they don't miss the important bits), but if the child indicates they can't wait, the child will be allowed to go
- children do not generally go to the toilet in pairs or bigger groups (unless as a whole class, e.g. before going to Mass), so may be asked to wait until another child has come back from the toilet. Again, if the child indicates they cannot wait, they will be allowed to go
- some children have specific needs for toileting. Class teachers are aware of these and have individual procedures for those children. These are shared with visiting staff, e.g. cover staff, so should be applied consistently. If this doesn't happen please speak to your child's teacher so we can rectify this - we want all children to be comfortable!

If a teacher becomes aware of specific patterns, such as your child needing to use the toilet much more than expected, they will communicate with you about this, as it may indicate something that needs to be addressed, such as an infection or that your child is worried about something, e.g. a specific lesson. On rare occasions, when children have not used toilets appropriately, these procedures may be adapted or slightly restricted for individual children to ensure all other children can continue to use the toilets without issue, but all children are able to use toilets as needed.

Next Year's Term Dates

The dates for the school terms are published on the school website [here](#).



Attendance Update

During the summer holidays, the way attendance law is used by Local Authorities was updated. This means that Fixed Penalty Notice (fines) are increasing and there are more stringent consequences for parents of children who do not attend school regularly. This reflects the importance the DfE is placing on children having good attendance. The latest DfE guidance, which you may find useful, is [here](#).

The ways schools record absences is also changing, which could impact on the 'codes' used for absences.

Please note that Headteachers **cannot** authorise holidays during term time and all requests for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances **must** be made by completing the Leave of Absence form available from the school office.

If you are finding it difficult to ensure your child has good attendance, please contact the school as soon as problems arise so that we can help as soon as and as much as possible.

Attendance is important!

We monitor all pupils' attendance and will contact you (often by letter and text message) if their attendance is getting lower than we'd expect or your child has had low attendance in the past. Please don't be offended - we have a duty to keep you informed of things that can affect your child's progress and/or wellbeing.

Lastly, please remember that term-time holidays **will not be authorised** and, in many cases, will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) being issued.

Whole school attendance so far this year is 94.9%

Attendance this week is as follows:

Year R	95.5%
Year 01	95.0%
Year 02	96.7%
Year 03	97.7%
Year 04	94.0%
Year 05	94.2%
Year 06	93.9%

Important Dates

- Wednesday 11th September - Meet the Teacher evening