

# St Thomas Primary School



## Winter Term 2024

We said a fond farewell to Mrs Byrne last term and wished her all the best for her retirement. The Afternoon Tea/Concert was a great success and Mrs Byrne enjoyed the Australian themed music for her retirement travels to Australia. Thank you to Mrs Dawson for her hard work coaching the children, to the Parent Council for providing refreshments and to all who supported Mrs Byrne's retirement celebrations.

As you will be aware the process of recruiting a Head Teacher for St Thomas and St Peter's Primary schools is still ongoing. The position was re-advertised and unfortunately there were no applicants. Next steps for the process are being considered by Moray Council and we will keep you informed. In the meantime, the school will continue to be supported by Ms Susan Buchan (Interim Head Teacher), Mrs Kristen Keedwell and Principal Teachers Mrs Clare McCann and Mrs Leigh-Anne Magee.

Pupils have settled well into the Winter Term and are looking forward to preparing for the annual Nativity and the Small School Christmas Carol concert. There are also the Christmas Parties/Canteen Christmas Meal to look forward to. A full list of diary dates are at the end of this newsletter.

Due to the increasing popularity of our Breakfast Club, we will be reviewing the staffing options to continue to provide a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for the St Thomas Community. Until the options have been considered Mrs Innes will be assisting Mrs McGregor on a temporary basis. We will keep you updated.

Thank you to our Parent Council who not only helped with the Afternoon Tea/Concert but also worked hard to organise a Halloween Party for pupils, which was a great success. If you would like to find out more about how the Parent Council's activities, come along to the next Parent Council Meeting which will be held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm. All welcome to attend.

It was good to see so many of you at Parents' Evenings on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November. If you did not manage to attend your appointment, please contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

The school photographer came into school on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November to take individual and family photographs. The order forms were issued on Monday.

### Message from Interim Head Teacher:

Thank you for welcoming me into the St Thomas' community. Mrs Keedwell and myself have enjoyed meeting the staff team and the pupils and we already have a strong sense of the school's warm ethos. Our aim is to ensure a little stability for the school so that a new head teacher is able to hit the ground running. We will base ourselves at St Thomas for at least part of each day so please feel free to get in touch with Mrs Winchester to arrange a time if there are issues you wish to discuss. In the meantime, I look forward to meeting some of you at the parent council meeting on Thursday.

Please be aware that if your child has vomited/had diarrhoea they should not attend school and should remain absent for 48 hours since their last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea. This is particularly important to minimise the spread and to keep the school open.

Please be reminded of our general health and safety:

- Children should not come to school too early but should aim to arrive as close to the bell as possible. Children will be met in the playground by a member of staff and shown where to line up.
- In the morning if you wish to speak to a teacher please call to make an appointment or you can pass on a message via the office.
- If your child is unable to attend school you should contact the school advising them of the reason for absence on each and every day your child is absent from school. Details regarding how you can advise the school of your child's absence are available here:  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/public/stthomaspskeith/uploads/sites/5613/2021/03/05104804/Reporting-A-Pupil-Absence.pdf> **Do not use Dojo to advise absences.**  
**Please also note that if your child had been vomiting or has had diarrhoea they should not attend school and should remain absent for 48 hours since their last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea.**
- For safety reasons, it is really important that the yellow zig zag lines on the road outside the school are kept clear. PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR CHILD/PARK ON THESE LINES. ALSO NO TURNING AT THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE.

### **Cost of the School Day**

Talking about money can be challenging. When struggling with costs, you may feel unable to talk about money, however, it could mean that you are missing out on help available and it may also be affecting how young people feel at school. At St Thomas', we want every family to know that support is available to reduce the cost of the school day and we are here to help families maximise income.

We are an inclusive school, where everyone belongs and can take part in everything we offer, without any barriers. We believe we offer high-quality experiences for all children and we then offer additional experiences or materials for those that require them, ensuring equity of opportunity. There are lots of ways we break down the barriers associated with poverty and here are just a few:

- Building a culture of dignity and respect, where we all care for each other and give support when it is needed.
- Having a thoughtful approach to how donations are given, eg. 'chuck it in a bucket' with no obligation to donate.
- Carefully considering how to take part in special days such as World Book Day with minimal costs to families.
- Providing recycled school clothing free of charge to anyone that requires it.
- Never charging for materials or experiences that take place during the school day.
- Having a 'No Child Left Behind Approach' for residential trips, funded (partly or in full, depending on circumstances) by our enterprise projects, local grants and support from the Parent Council.
- Working with the Parent Council to provide low-cost or free social events.
- Asking for donations from the Parent Council. They have previously funded a whole-school set of class novels, buses for school trips and play equipment and so on.

Useful links:

[Talking about the cost of the school day](#)

[Child Poverty Action Group](#)

[Moray Council Website- Need Help with Money](#)

[Benefits Services](#)

[Help with Council Tax](#)

[Benefits Services- Help with Rent](#)

[Citizens Advice Scotland](#)

[Moray Food Bank Plus](#)

[MFR Cash for Kids](#)

[Scottish Child Payment](#)

## **Parents Portal**

We are encouraging parents to register for the Parents Portal. Some parents already use this and find it useful for reporting absences, accessing ipay (for school meals), viewing the school calendar etc. Once all parents have registered we aim to invite online booking for parents' evenings and use the permission slip facility. Check out the link below which has useful guides to help with registration:

<https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/request/ParentsPortalLink>

## **Class News to follow**

### **School Website**

Please check out our website, see the link below. Our twitter feeds into our website so even if you don't have twitter you can keep up to date with what's going on in school

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/stthomaspskeith/>

### **School Uniform Suppliers**

Our online uniform suppliers are [www.myclothing.com](http://www.myclothing.com)

The government has produced guidance for schools regarding school uniform. There is also information for parents and carers regarding this guidance and it can be found via the following link:

[School uniform and clothing: a resource for parents and carers](#)

### **School Clothes Bank**

To support the Cost of the School Day, the school has a bank of recycled sweatshirts/cardigans/jackets. These are free to anyone and can either be collected or sent home with your child on request. Parents are welcome to come into school to view or can phone the school with their requests.

All donations of good condition school uniform items are gratefully received. Thank you for your ongoing support.

### **Parent Council**

Next meeting is on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm.

### **Canteen**

All children are eligible for free school meals until they reach P6. From P6 the cost of a school meal is £2.45. Payment for this can be made through Ipay. If you are not registered but would like to register, please contact the school for a code.

Canteen menu can be accessed here from the school website under parent information:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/public/stthomaspskeith/uploads/sites/5613/2024/06/14081110/Canteen-Menu-wef-15-April-2024.pdf>

The Catering Department have a number of vacancies for Relief Catering Assistants. Please visit:

[https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/moray-council/jobs?parent\\_cat=2090](https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/moray-council/jobs?parent_cat=2090)

### **Dates for your Diary**

<b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Parent Council Meeting, 6.30pm in school hall.
<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Fun P7 Transition Event at Keith Grammar School (to be confirmed).
<b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Canteen Christmas Lunch (12-1pm).
<b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Nativity in Church (2pm for Dress Rehearsal and 6.30pm for full performance). Early lunch 12-1pm.
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	P4-7 Christmas Party (1.30pm).
<b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	P1-4 Christmas Party (1.30pm).
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Small School Carol Service in St Thomas Church (9.30-10.30am). All welcome to attend.