

St Thomas Primary School



Spring Term 2025

It certainly has been a very wintry start to the new term. Thank you for your support and understanding with the decisions regarding amended school times/postponed Breakfast Club mornings, which were made in the interests of safety. Hopefully the weather will continue to improve and we can continue with a normal school routine.

We also welcomed our new Acting Head Teacher, Mrs Marianne Raikes who brings her many years of experience to the role. The appointment process for a permanent Head Teacher is still in progress and we will keep you updated with this.

Letter from new Acting Head Teacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Despite the wintry weather causing unfortunate disruptions to school routines at the start of this week, I have received the warmest of welcomes from everyone at St Thomas School, so I want to say a huge thank you for that. I am gradually getting to know names and faces and I am so looking forward to meeting more families as we go through the term.

I will be teaching regularly in both classes through the weeks and I am really excited to work with our pupils on their learning for this term.

Term 3 is always a busy term in schools, and already the class teachers have lots of plans in hand for some exciting learning opportunities, visits and visitors. We are planning to do some learning with our pupils around internet safety, if you would like more information or support on this, do get in touch.

Our Friday whole school assemblies are a great time to celebrate our pupils' achievements both in and out of school. If your child has something they would like to share in assembly, please let us know.

I very much welcome the chance to work closely with parents, so please don't hesitate to give me a call, if I can help or support you or your child in any way.

Best wishes,

Mrs Mari Raikes

School/ELC Registration

As you will be aware from the email sent that P1 School and nursery registrations will be open online from 13th – 24th January. See attached poster.

Dojo

We are continuing to review the use of Dojo and in the meantime it has been decided that it will be used for the purposes of sharing your child's work with you. The messaging facility will not be in use and you should contact the school using the usual channels in place. An email reminder has been sent regarding consent forms for parents that have not replied already. If we do not have consent by Friday 24th January it will be assumed that you do not wish your child to use Dojo and access will be removed.

Playmaker Sessions

We are working with Active Schools to support and up skill our older pupils in making the most of playtimes and in leading play sessions for younger pupils. It is so heartening to see our pupils shining as they develop their leadership skills. Amanda Walker from Active Schools will deliver training alongside our support staff, starting next week.

Parents Portal & Groupcall

In order to streamline communications between ourselves and home, the messaging facility within Dojo is not now in use. We would like to encourage parents to register for Groupcall Xpressions app (an email has been sent with details) as this compliments the existing email and text communications via Groupcall.

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>

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.
- Mornings tend to be busy for staff, so 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>
- 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](#)

To support the Cost of the School Day, the school has a bank of recycled and new sweatshirts/cardigans/jackets/trousers/pinafores/polo shirts. 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.

Change of clothes – we have a small stock of clothes that are used when pupils' own clothes have gotten wet/muddy. Please remember to return these items to school for use or alternatively you can include a spare set of clothes in your child's bag if you think that it may be required.

Class News

P1-4

We have quickly got back into the swing of things this term. We are already settled back in to literacy and numeracy lessons with our IDL and music lessons starting again in week 2. This term the children have decided to learn about different countries. Stemming from a love of football and flags we have named our topic Around the World. Each week we will fly to a new country on Google Earth and learn some facts and language from that country. We will learn about its flag and football strip too and add this to our classroom display. Homework will be sent out on week 2 as usual and children are expected to complete one task from the grid per week. We're looking forward to another busy term! *Mrs Ironside*

P4-7

See separate class overview sent out.

School Website

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

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

Parent Council

Next meeting is on Thursday 23rd January at 6.30pm.

Canteen

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 canteen Christmas lunch is on Tuesday 10th December (12-1pm). The menu for that day has been emailed and pupils will be able to choose on the day.

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

Dates for your Diary

Monday 13TH January to Friday 24th January	ELC and School Registrations online
Friday 17th January	P7 Rural Transition Open Day at Loft 2-3pm. Email sent. Staff to accompany children. Parents are welcome to attend
Tuesday 21st January	P1 & P7 National Dental Inspections in school 9-10am
Thursday 23rd January	Parent Council Meeting – School Hall 6.30-7.30pm (All welcome to attend)
Friday 24th January	P7 Loft Rural Transitions – sessions outwith school starting at 5.30pm. Weekly.
Monday 27th January	Missio Scotland Assembly with Gerard Gough for pupils.
Thursday 13th February	In-Service – school closed to pupils
Friday 14th February & Monday 17th February	Mid Term Break
Wednesday 19th March	Rotary Quiz for P6/7 pupils at Keith Primary 1.30pm (details to follow)
Friday 28th March	Spring Term Ends