

St Thomas Primary School



Determination

Respect

Faith

Autumn Term 2025

Welcome back! Hope you all had a lovely break. The weather was certainly really good. We welcomed 4 new P1 pupils and we have also a new P3 and P4 pupil. This takes our school roll to 38.

This term has really started off with great enthusiasm. Staff have worked hard to enhance the learning environment. Our classrooms are now named and this will make for memorable, friendly workspaces for all:

P1-4 - Balloch Room

P5-7 - Isla Room

Room 4 – Tarnash Room

Mrs McCann has tailored the Tarnash Room to provide supportive learning to any pupils requiring extra support and Mrs McIntosh will be assisting her with this.

We would like to invite parents to come into school to see the learning environment that has been created, in addition to viewing displays of work created by your children. This will be taking place on Wednesday 10th September (3-5pm). You can come in at any time between that times and stay for as long as you want. We look forward to seeing you there!

In addition to the surroundings we have also invested in new Mental Maths books and other online programmes to support learning in all areas.

The calendar is beginning to fill up. We are in the process of arranging outdoor activities through Outfit Moray for P6 and P7 pupils on 22nd and 23rd September. Look out for the email regarding this. See the full list of diary dates at the end of this newsletter.

Staffing

Last term we said goodbye to Pupil Support Assistant, Mrs Heather Stewart due to her temporary post finishing. Also Mrs Karen McGregor, Breakfast Club Support Worker has secured another position. We wish them all the best in their future careers.

Interviews are being held for the vacant Breakfast Club Support Worker position.

We also said a fond farewell to Mrs Susan McPherson our Pupil Support Assistant/Classroom Assistant/Children's Supervisor, who will be embarking on training for a new career. She will be missed and we wish her all the best in her future career.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club has resumed and this runs from 8.20 -8.45am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Healthy breakfast options are provided including toast, cereals fruit and yoghurt. There is no charge. Thank you to all who have returned their completed consent forms.

Homework

We looked at the responses from the homework survey which we asked parents and pupils to take part in last term. 86% of parents who responded said that they wanted their child to have some homework from school and were happy to support their child with doing homework. Pupils were less in favour, with 31% of pupils saying they would like to get homework. We have decided that we will make homework packs available for pupils. These will be slightly different for each class, but will typically include some spelling or letter sounds practice, some maths practice and a free choice book from the school library. Your child may be able to read this independently or may choose a book to share or for you to read with them. It is not a 'reading book' so please don't expect them to read it aloud to you. We value your support and partnership in your child's learning.

Parents Portal & Groupcall

We would like to encourage parents to register for Groupcall Xpressions app as this compliments the existing email and text communications via Groupcall. The app can easily be downloaded to iOS/Android mobile phone/tablet through the usual channels.

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>

ATTENDANCE

Habits of good regular attendance are important for your child's educational development, social skills and future positive pathways. However, we do understand that absence due to illness is unavoidable and should this be long term we will aim to support parents/carers in any way we can. In line with Moray Council guidelines absences will be monitored and we will contact parents/carers if absences rates are causing concern.

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 guidelines:

- 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/5613/2025/03/12112153/Reporting-A-Pupil-Absence.pdf>

- **ROAD SAFETY MARKINGS AT THE SCHOOL GATE**

Please be reminded that you **should not be stopping or parking on the yellow zig-zag lines outside the car park gate, particularly at dropping off and picking up times.** We understand that stopping or parking on Chapel Street can be challenging and that you want your child to get out of the car as near to the school as possible, however there is a very important reason for these lines and that is to protect children who are coming round

the corner and also children crossing the road to school. Due to their size they may not always be visible to a driver. Please do not drive into the school staff carpark to drop children off. The safety of our children is a top priority and your help with this is appreciated.

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.
- We do encourage pupils to change into a PE kit for PE lessons. Boys and girls are offered separate changing areas. For pupils who do not have a PE kit from home, we offer a new PE kit (shorts and t-shirt) for them to wear and keep at school. Please send your child to school with suitable footwear for PE, it is not easy to do PE in heavy boots, slippers or wellies.
- 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.

School Website

Please check out our website, see the link below.

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

School Uniform Suppliers

Our online uniform suppliers are www.myclothing.com

We also have a range of good quality recycled school clothing in our School Clothes Bank (see information above)

Parent Council

Date of next meeting - AGM

Thursday 25th September 6.30pm

Childcare to be confirmed.

Minutes and Agenda have been emailed to all parents.

Canteen

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

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file147882.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

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 10th September	Come and See Where I Learn (open classroom) 3-5pm (come anytime)
Tuesday 16th September	Flu vaccinations (consent forms have been issued)
Monday 22nd September	School photographer – individual/family photos
Monday 22nd September to Tuesday 23rd September	Outfit Moray for P7 and P6 pupils Consent form to be issued today (1 st sept) and email sent regarding the details (Note P6 and P7 pupils will have their photos taken before they go on the trip)
Thursday 25th September	Parent Council AGM 6.30pm in school hall (All welcome)
Monday 13th October to Friday 24th October	Autumn holiday – school closed
Friday 31st October	Pumpkin Fun Day (details to follow)
Monday 10th November to Tuesday 11th November	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Tuesday 16th December	Nativity in Church 6pm
Wednesday 17th December	P5-7 Christmas Party 1.30pm
Thursday 18th December	P1-4 Christmas Party 1.30pm Small School Carol Concert 10am in Church
(continued overleaf)	

Dates for your Dairy (continued)

Monday 22nd December to Friday 2nd January	Christmas Holiday
Thursday 12th February	In-service – school closed to pupils
Friday 13th February to Monday 16th February	Mid Term Holiday – school closed
Wednesday 18th February	Ash Wednesday Mass 9.30am
Wednesday 25th March	Daffodil Tea (details to follow)
Thursday 26th March	Easter Egg Competition pm
Monday 30th March to Friday 10th April 2026	Spring Holiday – school closed
Tuesday 21st & Wednesday 22nd March	Parents' Evenings 3.30-5.30pm (details to follow)
Monday 4th May	May Day Holiday – school closed
Thursday 7th May	May Procession of Flowers of Our Lady (in Church) at 2pm
Tuesday 12th May	Family Picnic and Sports Day (details to follow)
Thursday 14th May	Ascension Day Mass 9.30am in church
Monday 1st June 2026	Occasional Day Holiday – school closed
Tuesday 2nd June	Sponsored Walk/Scavenger Hunt and Picnic in Cuthil Park (details to follow)
Friday 26th June	Leavers' Mass 9.30am (details to follow)
Wednesday 1st July	2pm Leavers' Assembly and Prize-Giving (details to follow)

A full list of school holidays can be found at <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file123291.pdf>

