

# St Thomas Primary School



Determination

Respect

Faith

## Winter Term 2025

Starting the Winter Term we are looking forward to a busy term. As you will see from the diary dates there are lots planned. Artistic skills are definitely to the fore with Christmas cards being designed for the church and calendars for the Parent Council. Look out for more information regarding this.

The weather has certainly turned cooler and as we start another term, we would like to send out a friendly reminder that suitable warm clothing is essential for outdoor learning and play. We do have some items available in our School Clothes Bank – please get in touch if you wish to find out more about the School Clothes Bank. Please also ensure that your children's clothes are labelled with their name.

The children have settled well into their classes and with the supportive learning in the "Tarnash Room" being a real boost to the learning environment. For those of you that attended we do hope you enjoyed your visit "Come and See Where I Learn" last term. It was great to see so many attending. We hope to have more of these visits and are thinking of ways to make the experience even more welcoming! If you have any feedback from the visit, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We also welcomed 3 new pupils this week and our school roll is now at 42.

Our Breakfast Club continues to prove popular. Pupils can enjoy a healthy breakfast on Monday, Wednesday and Friday weekly from 8.20am until 8.45am, free of charge. Since the last newsletter we have appointed Ms Lauren Anderson who joins Mrs Sara George as a Breakfast Club Support Worker.

As you will have seen from the email sent "What's happening in School" that this week (week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> October) has lots going on in school. You will find a copy of this at the end of the newsletter. A full list of diary dates is also attached.

Bikeability will also be starting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Please check the email sent for further information.

As we approach Remembrance the school will be collecting for Poppyscotland. Pupils are welcome to bring small coin donations in exchange for a poppy.

A Bridge Building Workshop provided by Amco was enjoyed by pupils:



## **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](http://www.myclothing.com)

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

## **Parent Council**

The AGM did not go ahead as planned due to small numbers attending and an EGM took place in its place. Minutes for this will be sent out soon.

## **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](https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/moray-council/jobs?parent_cat=2090)

## What's happening in School (week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> October)

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| <b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October</b>    | <b>Bonfire Safety Talk from Fire Service for pupils</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October</b> | <b>"Build a Bridge workshops"</b> STEM (Science, Maths, Engineering and Technology). These are being led and funded by Amco (company who have managed the Union Bridge Repair).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October</b>  | <b>Dance workshops with Sharron Henderson</b> - There will be sessions for Nursery/P1-3 and for P5-7 for the next 5 weeks taking part during the school day. These are funded by PEF.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October</b>    | <p><b>Autumn Fun Day for all pupils and nursery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pupils can come to school wearing something red/orange/yellow/brown if they want (sorry no football strips allowed).</li> <li>○ Pumpkin Fun Competition at 10am – judged by our expert panel of independent adjudicators (the canteen ladies and Mrs Winchester)!</li> <li>○ Bring a pumpkin – pupils can bring a carved pumpkin into school or they can bring a pumpkin picture/model made at home. First prize and runner up prize for each class.</li> <li>○ Pumpkins and pictures will be on display in the hall and prizes will be awarded at the end of assembly.</li> </ul> <p><b>All Saints Assembly led by P5-7 class in school hall (11am) – all parents and families are most welcome to join us for this assembly.</b></p> <p><b>Autumn Fun Afternoon</b> for all pupils and nursery (many thanks to the Parent Council for funding this):</p> <p>Autumn Craft Activities each led by a staff member – for all pupils to choose the activities that they would like to do.</p> <p>There will be a "photo booth" of Halloween props-please bring something (if you have it) to lend to the photo booth (for example a mask, wig, a hat, a wand (no toy weapons, please). Pupils can choose to have their photos taken on a school ipad and may select one each to print and take home – if you do not wish your child to have their photo taken, please let us know.</p> <p>There will also be Autumn themed snacks and juice in the hall and a spooky themed playlist to dance to at the end of the afternoon. Also to take home there will be a wee guising treat.</p> |

### Christmas Jumper Update

Pupils may wear Christmas jumpers at school any day in Advent (from 1<sup>st</sup> December until the end of term (Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December).

Christmas jumpers – school has been gifted some Christmas Jumpers so we can have a "lending bank" of jumpers.

If any families have jumpers outgrown from last year – please donate to our Christmas Jumper Bank.

The Parent Council are also funding T-shirts for pupils to decorate.

## Dates for your Diary (from 3<sup>rd</sup> November – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025)

|          |              |                                                 |                                |
|----------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monday   | 3rd November | Active Schools Dance with Lauren & Staff Member | P5-7 Lunchtime session         |
| Thursday | 6th November | Sharron Henderson Dance                         | Whole school including nursery |

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|---------|---------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Monday  | 10th November | IN SERVICE | School closed to pupils |
| Tuesday | 11th November | IN SERVICE | School closed to pupils |

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|-----------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monday    | 17th November | Active Schools Dance with Lauren & Staff Member | P5-7 Lunchtime session         |
| Wednesday | 19th November | Police Visit                                    | P1-4                           |
| Thursday  | 20th November | Sharron Henderson Dance                         | Whole school including nursery |

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|----------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monday   | 24th November | Active Schools Dance with Lauren & Staff Member | P5-7 Lunchtime session         |
| Thursday | 27th November | Sharron Henderson Dance                         | Whole school including nursery |

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|--------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Monday | 3rd December | Active Schools Dance with Lauren & Staff Member | P5-7 Lunchtime session |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|

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| Thursday | 11th December | Canteen Christmas Lunch | Whole school including nursery (details to follow) |
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|-----------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tuesday   | 16th December | Nativity in Church   | 6pm (details to be confirmed) |
| Wednesday | 17th December | P5-7 Christmas Party | Afternoon                     |
| Thursday  | 18th December | P1-4 Christmas Party | Afternoon                     |

**Christmas Holiday – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2026.**

**School commences for Spring Term on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026**