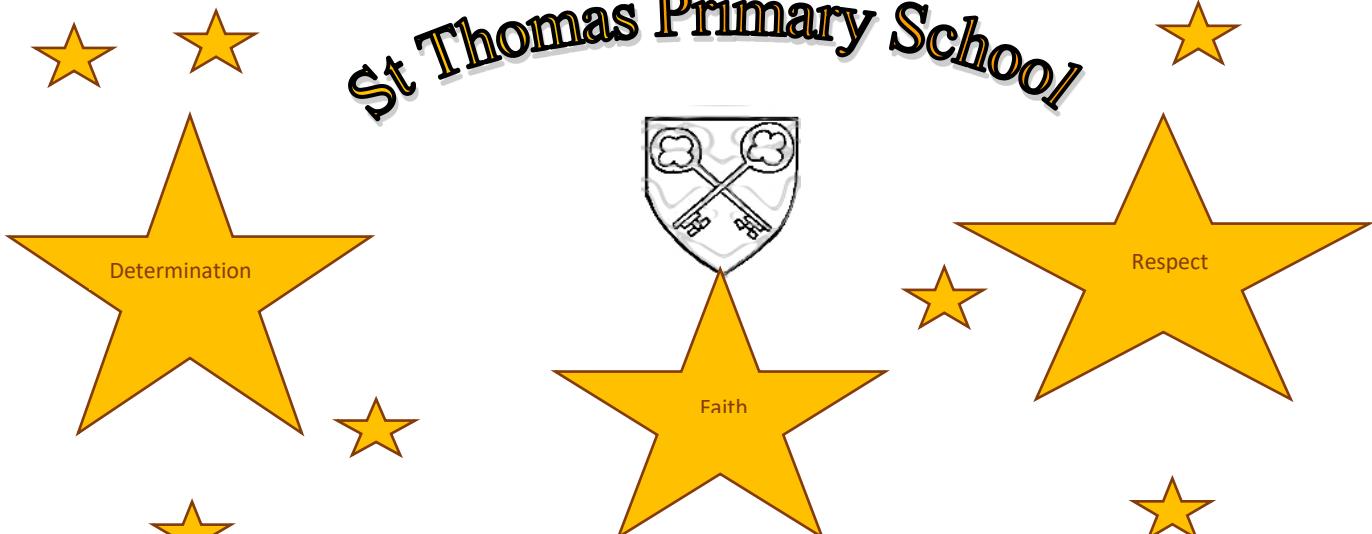


St Thomas Primary School



Spring Term 2026

A very wintry start to the new term with all that snow which resulted in school and nursery closures. Thank you to all for your patience during this time. Pupils were able to access “snowy day learning” and we hope that you found this easy to access.

We hope that there will be no further disruption due to weather, however please be reminded of the following systems we have in place to communicate school closures to parents:

- In the first instance you will receive a text message/email/notification via Xpressions App.
- Information on closures can also be found at <https://secure.moray.gov.uk/mcalerts/portal/>
- You may also receive an email alert message if you are registered with mygovscot <https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/home>
- Announcements for all closures may be made on local and national radio (Moray Firth Radio and BBC Radio Scotland).

Our first couple of weeks back in school have been busy and we are looking forward to the new term and thinking ahead with some transition activities planned. The Loft Youth Project have Friday evening transition activities planned for P7 pupils – details have been emailed. Active Schools are also leading lunchtime enhanced transition sessions for P7 pupils. More details will follow for further transitional activities for P7 and also new P1 pupils.

Active Schools' lunchtime dance sessions will continue on Mondays.

Registration for P1 2025/26 is taking place now and until 23rd January. If your child is five years old on or before 19th August 2026 or your child's fifth birthday falls between 19th August 2026 and 28 the February 2027, you must register your child for school. Please use the following link for school registrations:

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

At the same time nursery registration for 2025/26. All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled up to 1140 hours of funded ELC per academic year. Please use the link below for nursery registration:

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

We are looking forward to celebrating Scotland's National Poet with a traditional "Burns Supper" which will actually be a "Burns Lunch" and will be held on Tuesday 27th January. On the menu there will be haggis, neeps and tatties to enjoy. We will do the "toast to the haggis" and have some pipes or Scottish music for ceilidh dancing, which we have been enjoying practicing. On that Tuesday pupils can wear something tartan or their national dress. Don't worry if your child doesn't have something tartan, as we will have plenty of tartan bits and bobs here. There will be an email/text reminder sent out regarding this nearer the time.



The annual Robert Burns Federation competition will take place on Saturday 7th March. Mrs Dawson and Mrs Raikes will be gathering names of pupils wishing to take part. We have secured funding for transport and will send out an email with further details soon.



Mrs Raikes shared with P1-4 pupils the experience of a Baptism. Pupils enjoyed role playing and learning what is involved in this ceremony which welcomes a person, usually a baby, into the Christian faith through a service involving water, promises, and community, symbolizing purification, rebirth, and initiation into the church.

Parents Portal & Groupcall

We would like to encourage parents to register for Groupcall Xpressions app as this complements 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. **This is also useful for getting updates on school closures due to adverse weather.** 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)

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

Tuesday	27 th January	Burns Supper in Canteen	Lunchtime
Friday	30th January	P7 Transitions at The Loft	5.30-6.30pm
Friday	6th February	P7 Transitions at The Loft	5.30-6.30pm
Thursday	12th February	In-Service	School closed to pupils
Friday - Monday	13 th February - 16 th February	Mid Term Holiday	School closed
Wednesday	18th February	Ash Wednesday Mass in Church	9.30am
Friday	20th February	P7 Transitions at The Loft	5.30-6.30pm
Friday	27th February	P7 Transitions at The Loft	5.30-6.30pm
Friday	6th March	P7 Transitions at The Loft	5.30-6.30pm
Wednesday	25 th March	Daffodil Tea	Details to follow
Thursday	26 th March	Easter Egg Competition	Details to follow
Monday-Friday	30 th March – 10 th April	Spring Holiday	School closed