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## VISION STATEMENT

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*At St. Thomas the Apostle Primary School we believe:*

- *That the true message of the Gospel should be modelled by all members of the school community and therefore become a lived reality*
- *That the Catholic traditions, ideals, values and attitudes should be fostered through a comprehensive Religious Education Program which includes rich experiences in Scripture and Liturgy*
- *That through the use of a variety of structures and teaching strategies all children will be encouraged to reach their full potential*
- *That the curriculum should be challenging and relevant to the needs of individual students. It should be sequential, encourage independence and support the learning continuum of life*
- *That the skills and talents of all Staff are recognised and valued and that through peer support and professional development opportunities, Staff are assisted both personally and professionally to achieve excellence*
- *That through positive relationships we create an environment where there is a sense of belonging, acceptance, respect, growth and support for each other within our community*

*A vision without a task is a dream  
A task without a vision is drudgery  
A vision and a task is hope for the world*

## **ENROLMENT POLICY**

It is our goal to ensure that those families who desire a Catholic education are supported to achieve this desire. It is also our aim that those who join our community be they teachers, students or families, value our educational aims, which have been developed and lived in the Gospel spirit of freedom and love.

To ensure that there is access to Catholic Education for all families, contribution from parents for the maintenance of our Catholic School should be at a level that enables parents to exercise their choice of schooling without undue financial hardship.

Our Enrolment Policy also provides for the inclusion of those applicants who are not Catholic, but who desire for their children to be educated in a Christian environment and who willingly recognise, accept and value the Catholic nature of our School. Such enrolments must not cause the exclusion of a Catholic applicant and must be kept within the context of Catholic Education Office Enrolment Policy.

It is important that applicants understand that acceptance into St. Thomas the Apostle School does not give them automatic right of admission into a Catholic Secondary School (CEOM policy 2.4).

## **ENROLMENT PROCESS**

Application for Enrolment must be made on the official Enrolment Form. Students must turn 5 years before 30<sup>th</sup> April of the year in which they wish to commence school.

Following lodgement of application, confirmation of application for enrolment will be acknowledged in writing. When a position is available an offer will be made in writing. To accept the position, the place of offer must be acknowledged along with payment of a non-refundable fee.

## **PRIORITY ACCEPTANCE**

Applicants will be accepted in the following order:

- Siblings of students already in the School
- Catholic students from within the Parish boundaries
- Catholics from outside the Parish boundaries
- Others who meet the requirements as set out in this Policy

## **ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students, who have special needs and require additional support to ensure adequate access to educational programs, will be assisted through the support of an Enrolment Support Group. Families seeking enrolment for such a student should request this assistance when making application. It is recommended that all information pertinent to the child's enrolment is given at the interview. This enables adequate time for planning and meeting the Principal & Special Ed. Coordinator. Learning Support Officers are employed to work with the students who receive extra funding. The Principal in conjunction with the Student Services Coordinator decide how the funding is allocated.

## SCHOOL HOURS

- Classroom doors open            8:45 am
- Meditation commences           8:50 am
- Session 1                            9:00 am – 11:00 am
- Lunch Break                        11:00 pm – 11:50 am
- Session 2                            11:50am – 1:50 pm
- Afternoon Break                  1:50pm – 2:35 pm
- Dismissal                            3:30 pm



Students are required to arrive no earlier than 8:35am and no later 8:50am and be ready to commence classes at 9:00 am. Parents are able to talk with teachers in regard to matters affecting their children prior to 8:50.

In term one Preps commence on the first day of school and during February do not attend school on Wednesday, all other days are full school days.

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL-HOURS CARE PROGRAM (OSHClub)

This program is conducted in our hall adjacent to the school. It is situated next to the Church. It is a comfortable space with a very adequate kitchen. It is an excellent environment for such a program to run.

This program aims to provide quality, affordable and accessible 'Before' and 'After' School Care in a caring, friendly and stimulating environment for the children at St. Thomas the Apostle Primary School. The program is designed to provide a variety of activities to meet children's 'Before' and 'After' School needs.

Children will be provided with breakfast and afternoon tea and a range of recreational activities, which may include art and craft, indoor and outdoor games and cooking. Opportunities are provided for those who prefer a quiet time or wish to complete homework. Applications are completed online.

### CO-ORDINATOR:

Managed by OHSclub  
[www.oshclub.com.au](http://www.oshclub.com.au)

### HOURS OF OPERATION:

Before School    7:00 am – 8:45 am  
After School     3:30 pm – 6:30 pm

*To ensure a quality program, and continuity with regard to school, the Coordinator liaises with the Principal regularly in order to support the needs of the children.*

*Prep children are collected from their classrooms after school until they have enough independence to walk to the Out of Hours School Care Program by themselves.*

## CURRICULUM

At St Thomas the Apostle School, teachers focus on learning for all students in order to move each one from their point of need along their learning continuum. Teachers make evidence-based decisions after analysing data that has been collected in pre and post testing, standardised tests, anecdotal records, work samples, professional dialogue and observing what a student can 'do, say, make or write'. That way, teachers can plan and implement work that caters to the needs, abilities and interests of all students.



Our teachers are aware that chronological and mental ages do not necessarily correspond and so, some children are extended and some receive intervention, often catered for within their classroom as well as receiving individual or small group support with trained staff. The students are respected for the stage of development they are at and programs are planned so that they are appropriate for each student.

Learning outcomes are taken from the Victorian Curriculum guidelines. This sets out what every child should learn in their first eleven years of schooling in Mathematics, English, Science, Humanities (History, Civics and Citizenship, Geography and Economics), Technologies (Design and Digital), Languages (Italian), The Arts (Visual, Dance, Drama, Media, Music), Health and Physical Education.

The Religious Education program is taught through units of work linked with social justice issues. Students develop their catholic identity and faith through their involvement in whole school and class Masses, prayer services, meditation, religious lessons and sacramental programs. The resource text, 'To Know Worship and Love' is used from Prep to Year Six.

We believe that learning is inter-related and as such, skills, concepts, values and knowledge are transferrable via an integrated curriculum and the inquiry approach. Student engagement is enhanced through the use of technology, student voice and student choice. Students set learning and personal goals and develop self-management skills through scaffolded learning and expert teaching.

At the commencement of each term, parents receive an Overview, which outlines the term's work in the various curriculum being taught in each Year level and specialist class. Parents also receive two detailed formal reports, mid-year and at the end of the year. Early in the year, parents attend a chat session with teachers. This is to set up a relationship with teachers and to discuss matters that may affect their child's overall performance. Throughout the year, there are opportunities for students to showcase their learning, such as, at school assemblies, school events and level presentations.

## SPECIALIST TEACHING AREAS

Specialist teachers are employed to teach LOTE (Italian) Visual Arts, Kitchen Garden and Physical Education on a weekly basis throughout the school.

**Visual Arts** - is taught weekly at St Thomas in a specially designed art studio. This program is coordinated by a practising artist and students' work is regularly displayed around the school. The visual arts exhibition is a biannual event and is a wonderful showcase of the high standard of work reached by our students. From time to time, artists in residence are invited to work with students on special projects.

**Music and Performing Arts** – Every alternate year the whole school performs a major concert coordinated by the Music/Performing Art Teacher. This is held in professional performance centres and students have the opportunity to experience live drama and music. On the alternate year the senior students learn instrumental music and perform at an evening social event.

**Garden & Kitchen** Stephanie Alexander Program – Students are taught through the Stephanie Alexander Program how to manage a garden and this is complemented through cooking in our Domestic Kitchen. Sustainability and Biological Science are the focus of the Gardening Curriculum. Healthy eating and developing cooking skills are the focus of the Kitchen Program. The school maintains an extensive organic garden in which the students learn the balance of nature, seasonal variations with fruits and vegetables and the science of food. The Stephanie Alexander Program is followed from the garden to the kitchen. In 2015 we produced a cookbook entitled “*Sharing our Bounty*” and is available at the office for purchase.

## OUR VISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE

At St Thomas we believe that Religious Education invites students to think deeply, critically and philosophically about the Catholic faith in a diverse global community. We believe that Religious Education builds an understanding of self, others, the world and God. As religious educators we encourage students to appreciate the role of prayer, rituals, symbols, sacraments and sacred texts in people's lives. We value the importance of exploring sacred texts and encourage students to question, critically analyse and interpret these texts. As a dialogue school that is open to religious questioning we enable our students to recognise, respect and value the Religious diversity within our community. Engaging our students with the Catholic tradition informs discernment in decision making and enables them to take relevant action for the common good.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

At St Thomas we use the New RE Framework to plan and implement learning experiences. The framework sits within the context of the Education Framework for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Horizons of Hope. Where possible Religious Education is planned with Inquiry units of work so that students can make real life connections to the learning which occurs in Religion. Our Parish Priest works with the Staff, especially the Principal our Religious Education Leader to provide positive experiences in the area of liturgical celebrations, which help establish our Catholic identity and nurture our traditions.

## SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

Students in Year 3 are prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Each year students in Year 6 receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Religious Education Leader and classroom teachers collaboratively support parents in preparing the students for the Sacraments. This is supported by a whole school focus. All students participate in the class program for the preparation of the Sacraments, including those not receiving the Sacrament. Parents are supported with practical information about the program and with faith formation sessions to support them in the preparation of their children for the reception of each of the Sacraments.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

At St Thomas the Apostle Primary School we have a shared philosophy that we are teaching children as individuals, not grades. As members of a dynamic society we acknowledge the ever-changing nature of teaching. We believe in immersing children in a relevant, personalised learning environment that enables them to experience success and enjoyment as they journey towards their real potential.

We believe we have high quality teaching that engages students and fosters creative and high order thinking.

We recognise that the curriculum for all Victorian students is governed by the Victorian Curriculum. Teachers cater to each child's needs and abilities in the work they plan and implement daily. We strive to maximise learning for every student with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy

We also challenge the children to be active life- long learners and to make informed responsible choices in their daily lives.

Effective teaching and learning allows students to:

- Achieve success in all curriculum areas
- Be actively involved in acquiring new concepts
- Access and organise information and use it to enhance their learning
- Work in flexible groupings and on an individual level
- Have access to a range of new technologies
- Develop skills to support 'life' skills

Effective teaching and learning allows teachers to:

- Act as positive role models
- Gain an understanding of the children's talents, abilities and challenges to ensure that every child achieves success
- Create an engaging and stimulating environment
- Be aware of the various learning styles of children
- Be conversant with current educational practices
- Use data to effectively drive teaching and learning opportunities
- Provide authentic feedback to students that is non-judgmental & very encouraging



## SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT ENRICH OUR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

- ❖ Gymnastics Program
- ❖ School Band/Choir
- ❖ Camp Program
- ❖ Interschool Sport
- ❖ Reading Recovery Program
- ❖ Instrumental Music Lessons  
(*optional*)
- ❖ Counselling Support
- ❖ Maths Extension Classes
- ❖ Maths lunchtime activities
- ❖ Book Club
- ❖ Chess Club
- ❖ Speech Pathology
- ❖ Integration Program
- ❖ Swimming Program
- ❖ Dance Program
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Perceptual Motor Program
- ❖ Computer Technology and Coding Club
- ❖ Visual & Performing Arts
- ❖ Buddy Program
- ❖ Student Counsellor Service
- ❖ Student Leadership Programs  
(*Senior*)
- ❖ Peer Mediation
- ❖ Social Justice Groups
- ❖ Student Representative Council
- ❖ Junior, Middle & Senior Literacy  
Intervention
- ❖ Junior, Middle & Senior Maths  
Intervention
- ❖ P-6 Outdoor Education Program
- ❖ Seasons Program (Grief and Loss)
- ❖ Students Grief Program
- ❖ Fire Carriers
- ❖ School Production
- ❖ Circus Skills Program

### **PASTORAL CARE/STUDENT WELLBEING**

An important aspect of our work at St. Thomas' is Pastoral Care. There is a Pastoral Care group, which meets weekly to assist teachers and parents with any concerns that may arise concerning a child's development and wellbeing.

### **STUDENT COUNSELLOR**

A counselling service is available at the school. Through this service, students and families are assisted to work through a variety of issues. The counsellor works independently with students and families. He/She also supports the work of teachers and offers professional sessions for the school community. The Principal also counsels children as part of her work in Student Wellbeing. Student Counsellors also work in small groups under the supervision of the Principal. Professional nights are offered by the Counsellor.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Through a school referral process, students have access to services provided by the Catholic Education Office. Such services include Speech Pathology, Psychological assessments and Education assessments. The school has a Special Student Services Officer who works closely with the principal, parents and teachers overseeing this program.

### **PEER MEDIATION PROGRAM**

Senior students are trained to act as Peer mediators in the event of a minor dispute between students. Through this program, the Mediators are given the opportunity to develop leadership and negotiation skills. It also allows all students to develop the ability to problem solve and to develop skills of conciliation.

### **LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

A special program has been designed for children in the senior level who are chosen to form part of the Leadership Team. This program runs throughout the school year and includes some professional development outside the school.

### **BUDDY PROGRAM**

Our Buddy Program involves the older children being paired with the junior students. Regular planned activities between the Classes are held so that the students involved become friends and are there to support each other. This provides a 'buddy' for the younger child and gives to the older student the opportunity to develop leadership skills and responsibility.

### **SEASONS PROGRAM**

The Seasons Program is offered each year. This is a support program for those students who have suffered a loss through death or family separation. A trained facilitator conducts the program. An Adult Seasons Program for grief is also offered from time to time. There is a well-resourced adult library available to parents dealing with matters affecting separation, divorce or other matters of loss, i.e. death.

### READING RECOVERY

Despite good first teaching, a proportion of students will be identified at the end of the Prep year as experiencing difficulty with reading and writing. The Reading Recovery Program provides one-to-one intervention to assist such students. These students are given support to bring their skills up to the average level of the class.

### LITERACY INTERVENTION

Qualified educators provide excellent support at Junior, Middle and Senior levels following teacher assessments at the beginning of the year. These staff work under the guidance of the Director of Learning and Teaching, mainly in Literacy and Numeracy.

### QUICKSMART NUMERACY INTERVENTION

QuickSmart Numeracy is a mathematics intervention program for middle and senior school students. It has been designed to improve students' learning by focusing on developing fast and accurate basic skills. QuickSmart lessons are run with a pair of students, 3 times per week for half an hour each lesson. The structure of the lessons provides deliberate practice of new number facts, combined with the use of appropriate strategies to enable the student to remember the facts and eventually automatically recall each fact. When students can automatically recall number facts, their working memory is freed up so that they are able to engage meaningfully with more demanding mathematical tasks. The QuickSmart programs have been developed by the SIMERR National Research Centre at the University of New England and are based on educational theory. The program is backed up with 15 years of data demonstrating its effectiveness at improving the learning of struggling students in a range of school settings.

### SWIMMING PROGRAM



The students in Prep – Year 2 participate in a Swimming Program. Lessons are conducted by qualified Australian Swim Teachers at a local registered Swim School. An inter-house Swimming Carnival is conducted each year for the Year 3 - 6 students.

### PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAM

This program is conducted for the children in the Prep Grades. It is a sensory-motor program designed to develop skills in the areas of perception, co-ordination and strength.

### GYMNASTICS/CIRCUS SKILLS PROGRAM

Students in Years Prep, years 1 and 2 participate in a Gymnastics skill development program. This is conducted through Kidskills and runs for one term focussing on gross motor skills.



### DANCE PROGRAM (Every second Year)

Students in Years 5 and 6 are introduced to Modern and Traditional Dance. A dance instructor is employed by the School for a ten-week block during Term 3. This culminates in a performance held bi-annually at a basket supper for parents and children in the Senior school. Dance is also taught in the middle school. Every two years we hold a major school performance at a Performance Centre. Students become actively involved in this biannual event.

### **CAMP PROGRAM**

Students in Years 5-6 are taken on camp annually. This experience provides an opportunity to develop personal skills such as community living, independence and self- confidence. Every alternate year the senior students visit Canberra for 4 days.

### **INTERSCHOOL SPORT**

We are members of the Eltham and District Sports Association. Students in Years 5-6 participate in the following sporting activities - Bat Tennis, Rounders, Softball, Cricket, Football, Netball and Volleyball. We are also involved in Cross Country Running, the Swimming Carnival and Athletics Carnival

### **PLAYGROUP**

We have a Playgroup, which operates every Tuesday morning from 9:00 – 11:00 in the school hall. (Children 0-5years).

### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

Our school offers lessons in piano, keyboard, guitar, drums, vocals, wind instruments, percussion and strings. Applications are available via CareMonkey.

### **LUNCHTIME GAMES ACTIVITIES**

An alternative program is provided once a week during lunchtime for those children who enjoy playing games. This activity enables children to develop skills in critical thinking. These activities including Lego play are offered in the Discovery Centre.

### **COUNSELLING SUPPORT**

We are aware of the need to support students who require some emotional support on various levels. To this end we have a psychologist working at the school as well as various social skills programs coordinated by our Student Wellbeing Coordinator. These programs include a range of strategies to help students grow in social stamina.

We also believe strongly in supporting families and so we offer parenting courses and occasional evening sessions for parents to learn more about matters such as building resilience in students. Grief programs are also available for students who may be experiencing loss of one kind or another.

### **RELATIONSHIP COUNSELLOR**

The Parish and School share a Relationship Counsellor who is available to parents in our school.

### **SCHOOL CHOIR & BAND**

Students are given the opportunity to join our School Choir from years one to six, and our school band from Years 3 to 6. Through this experience, their musical skills are developed and they have the opportunity to perform at school functions. The members of our choir perform at various religious events.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL/LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Through the Student and Leadership Team, students are given the opportunity to develop leadership qualities, gain a sense of service and to have the opportunity to raise, discuss and solve issues.

The Leadership program includes setting up leadership at the junior and middle school level. The senior leadership are given a comprehensive program throughout the year.

This program is overseen by the Student Wellbeing Coordinator and leaders meet on a fortnightly basis.

## **BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The aim of the Behavioural Management Policy is to develop within the School community, positive values towards authority, towards each other, towards the wider community and towards our environment. It also aims to develop positive self-esteem in the members of the School Community.

This is done through the following:

- Weekly Principal Awards in each class room
- Gold Award (Five Gold Awards culminates in a school pin)
- 'Be A Star on the Yard' Award is given for outstanding yard behaviour
- Birthday Acknowledgements
- Awards & acknowledgements are published weekly in newsletter
- Students are affirmed and encouraged in a supportive and reassuring climate within the classroom.
- A whole school program exists to support positive learning and behaviour providing a safe and secure learning environment

We believe that all in the community must accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Therefore, clear expectations are set down for staff, parents and students. Class and School rules are listed with stated consequences. A copy of this Policy is available to all parents. In 2012 we introduced Restorative Practice – a program to help students resolve conflict by taking ownership of the situation. We continue to upgrade and professionally develop Staff in this area.

Self-esteem courses are coordinated by the student Wellbeing Coordinator and offered to senior students to build their self-esteem and give them personal power and self-assurance as they prepare for adolescents.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Keeping our channels of communication open across all aspects of our school ensures improved outcomes for our children. Supportive leadership has a significant impact on the morale and motivation of staff, student learning outcomes, student welfare and parent satisfaction. Once a year in June, the Principal presents an annual report to the school community outlining our results in learning and teaching. Also, the Principal presents a report to the Parish Education Board several times a year which is also published in the school newsletter and on the school's website.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### SCHOOL UNIFORM

Every student should wear his/her uniform with pride. Hair should be worn neatly and tied back for safety and hygiene. Hair ribbons should be in school colours (i.e brown and gold).

<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	School design check dress Fawn or White socks Brown school shoes/boots Green brim hat with logo St. Thomas' school rugby top
	<u>WINTER</u>	Pleated winter tunic or skirt Straight leg trousers Fawn long sleeve shirt (Peter Pan Collar) Chocolate tights/socks Brown school shoes/boots St. Thomas' school rugby top
<u>BOYS</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	Fawn open-neck short sleeve shirt Brown shorts Fawn socks Brown school shoes/boots Green brim hat with logo St. Thomas' School rugby top
	<u>WINTER</u>	Brown Pants Fawn Long sleeve shirt Brown school shoes/boots St. Thomas' School jumper  School Bag with Logo Bag and hat may be purchased from the School

Northern Regional Uniforms are in attendance at the school on Tuesday's between 2.30pm – 4:00pm or every day Mon-Fri 9am-5pm at Unit 21, 8 Oleander Dve, South Morang.

They can be contacted on 9436 4005. Email: [sales@northerregionaluniforms.com.au](mailto:sales@northerregionaluniforms.com.au)  
Orders can also be placed through the office to support the life of busy families.

### SPORTS UNIFORM (BOYS AND GIRLS)

During the summer months children are to wear brown sport shorts, gold sports polo, white socks and appropriate sports shoes.

During winter children should be attired in the school tracksuit, shorts, gold sports polo and appropriate sports shoes.

Parents will be notified if the sports uniform is to be worn on any other day, other than the timetabled physical education day.

- Runners may only be worn to and from school on PHYSICAL EDUCATION/SPORT DAYS
- Children are encouraged to wear a house coloured t-shirt for major interhouse sports event

## **SECOND-HAND CLOTHING**

The School Community Association sells good quality second-hand clothing. New school bags, hats, socks and tights may also be purchased through the Association. The second hand uniform shop is open every Tuesday between 3:15pm – 3:45pm and Thursday at 8:30am – 9:00am in the hall or orders may be placed at the office.

## **SCHOOL HATS**

All children from Prep to Year 6 are expected to wear their school hat to and from school during first Term and fourth Term, at recess and lunch and during all outdoor school activities. Sunscreen may also be worn and is available in each classroom. Hats may be purchased from our uniform supplier. Hats are green (new style) or brown (old style) broad brimmed with the school monogram.

## **LIBRARY BAGS**

All children from Prep to Year 6 are required to use a library bag when attending the Discovery Centre. This will ensure that books are kept in the best possible condition after borrowing.

## **ART SMOCKS**

All children from Prep to Year 6 are asked to have either an art smock or 'old shirt' to protect their clothing during art classes. Please make sure that all your child/ren's belongings are clearly marked or labelled with their name. The school does NOT take responsibility for missing items. If, however, items are lost there is a lost property collection, which may be inspected between 8.45am-9.00am and 3.25pm-3.40pm. This is located in the Administration Building.

## **LUNCHES**

Children eat their play lunch and lunches under the supervision of their teacher, in the classroom. If their lunch is not finished in due time, they eat under supervision on seats in the playground. Wednesday is a 'waste free' day to support our Sustainability program.

## **WATER BOTTLES**

Children are asked to bring a water bottle to school. This is kept with them all day to ensure that they are well hydrated.

## **PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION**

Children are supervised by three teachers on a 'normal' routine day during playtime and lunchtime. There is also a staff member on First Aid Duty during play and lunchtimes. On wet and extremely hot days the children remain inside under supervision. Special arrangements are also made to care for children on very hot days.

There are teachers officially on duty before school hours - 8.35am - 9.00am and after school hours 3.30pm - 3.45pm.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

FIRE DRILL AND DISASTER PLAN ROUTINES are practised throughout the school year. Clear evacuation procedures are on display near the exit door in each classroom.

## **COMMUNITY DAYS**

From time to time children from Prep to Year 6 are involved in a particular theme, which often lasts for the duration of one week or more e.g. 'Celebrating Learning Week', 'Italian Week', or special Feast Days. The subjects are co-ordinated throughout the school during this week and parents are invited to participate. Notification of particular themes and special community celebrations will be advertised through the Newsletter. There is also published at the beginning of each school year and updated on a term basis, a Calendar of Events.

## **EXCURSIONS/INCURSIONS**

Each year it is expected that all children will have the opportunity to participate in excursions (away from school) and incursions (where Educators come to the school). These are planned by teachers on a term basis or when the need arises due to a particular theme being studied in class. The basic aim of any excursion/incursion is to give the child first-hand experience from which he or she is then able to discuss and work through particular School projects. Parents will be notified of the excursion/incursions in advance and details will be provided about the outing. It is imperative that parents sign excursion permission forms and return these to school prior to the excursion. Children will not be allowed to attend excursions without signed parental permission.



## ADMINISTRATION



### PAYMENTS

Payments made to the school for school fees, levies, etc. are to be enclosed in an envelope.

Please ensure:

1. Your child's name
2. Your child's grade
3. Amount enclosed - and Purpose (e.g. book club, school fees, etc.); are written on the outside of the envelope.

### EFTPOS & DIRECT DEBIT

EFTPOS/Credit Card and Direct Debit facilities for payment of school fees and levies are available. Information and Direct Debit Request Forms are available from the Office if you wish to take advantage of this facility.

### COMMUNICATING TO PARENTS

A school **newsletter** is published weekly and is emailed to parents. The newsletter is also published weekly on the school's website [www.stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au)

These weekly newsletters include articles by the Principal, Specialist teachers, School Community and also includes Children's Awards. There is also a separate Prep newsletter sent out regularly throughout the term. All classrooms set up a **blog** enabling sound communication to parents. Our school **App** gives parents information immediately and is helpful to notify parents of change or forthcoming events.

### IDENTIFICATION BADGES

All teachers and staff members wear an ID badge with their name and position on staff listed. All visitors must sign in at the school office and wear an ID tag stating their status while on school grounds.

### WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

All visitors to the school, including parents, who are working in classrooms must obtain a Working With Children Check. These badges must be displayed at all times whilst present in the school, and a copy must be provided to the Office for record keeping.

### PUPIL FREE DAYS

Each year the school is closed at various times to enable the staff to take part in professional development activities. The purpose of these days is to ensure that staff is kept informed of the latest teaching methods and strategies and that curriculum policies are developed. The school's programs are then assessed and updated when necessary.

## PREP ORIENTATION

At St Thomas the Apostle Primary School our aim is to make students feel comfortable and confident in their transition from Pre-School to School. There are three orientation sessions that run throughout November to help assist the students and parents with their transition to school.

The aims of these sessions are to:

- Familiarise the students with the classroom they will be in the following year.
- Allow the students to meet and get to know their teacher for the following year.
- Establish with the students the routine of the classroom
- Familiarise themselves with the whole school environment

We also hope to make the transition for parents easier, by informing parents of the curriculum, issues that may arise in Prep and also practical information on uniforms and school groups. These parent sessions are run at the same time as the prep transition sessions and parents find them most informative.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOOL YEAR

- ❖ Father's Day Breakfast
- ❖ Mother's Day Luncheon
- ❖ Grandparents Day
- ❖ Prep Graduation
- ❖ Prep Teddy Bear's Picnic
- ❖ Senior Graduation
- ❖ Performing Arts Festival
- ❖ Stations of the Cross
- ❖ Christmas Carols
- ❖ Visual Arts Exhibition
- ❖ Inter-house Sports / Swimming Carnivals
- ❖ Extra Curricula clubs, including Chess Club, Games Club
- ❖ St. Thomas the Apostle Feast Day including a Week of Celebrations
- ❖ Special Curriculum Nights ..... to name but a few



## MEDICAL AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

### SCHOOL RECORDS

At the commencement of each school year, all parents will be given a Student Medical / Emergency Form to complete. This provides the school with up-to-date details such as address, telephone number, emergency contact and medical condition details. Please notify the school of any change of address or emergency telephone numbers. As well as medical information, permission for photos to be taken ensure requirements are met.

### ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parents are requested not to send their children to school if they are unwell. A written explanation by the child's parent/guardian is required the day the child returns to school. Attendance rolls are marked twice daily. Parents will be contacted by telephone if a child needs to be sent home. Parents of children that have received a bump to the head will be notified. For this reason, emergency telephone numbers are essential. After 3 days of absence the school will contact parents if there has been no notification.

## MEDICATION

Medication required to be taken during school hours must be accompanied by the official 'Administration of Medication' form. These forms are available from the office. Information required includes -

- The type of medication
- The reason for its administration
- The dosage and time to be taken

Medication taken by students during school hours will be recorded in the Medication Book. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES can the child carry this medication in their bag, nor self-administer unless previously discussed and approved by the Principal.

## ANAPHYLAXIS

All EpiPens are stored with the child's action plan in the First Aid Room. Each year Teachers are given refresher training in the administration of EpiPens. In each teacher's First Aid Bag there are Medical Alert cards identifying children with medical alerts and plan of procedure.

EpiPens are sent home at the end of the school year and it is vital we have it returned at the beginning of the new year at school.

## ASTHMATICS

Children with asthma need to provide the school office with their Ventolin/spacers and an up-to-date action plan. Medication and plan is stored in the First Aid room and a record is kept of what medication the child has had. Teachers and the office must be notified if a student has this medication and if symptoms change.

## FIRST AID

A well-equipped first aid room is situated close to the Admin office. Good visibility enables staff to monitor the wellbeing of children who are resting in this area. The Principal or Deputy Principal will authorise staff to notify parents should a decision be made that the child needs to go home. Medical records are quickly accessed through a computer in the first aid room. Parents must ensure that the school is provided with up to date medical information and contact numbers. These details are requested at the beginning of the school year.



## SCHOOL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR IMMUNISATION IN VICTORIA

Since 1997, all new students in all primary schools are required to have a certificate of Immunisation in the correct form. This applies to government, Catholic and independent schools. The DTP booster is a prerequisite before a school immunisation certificate can be issued. The certificates states whether the child's immunisation is complete or whether it is incomplete.

An incomplete certificate can be issued in three circumstances:

- If the child's parents are conscientious objectors to immunisation
  - If the child has a genuine medical contra-indication to one or more of the vaccines
  - If the child's immunisations have fallen behind, and there is no time, to complete the missed immunisations before school commences, (in this instance the parent is required to sign an undertaking that the child's immunisations will be completed. A certificate indicating complete immunisation should then be issued as a replacement when the immunisations are completed).
- If a child is NOT immunised, they are eligible to be excluded from school should an outbreak in an infectious disease be present in the school.

At present in Victoria, only local governments are authorised to issue the certificate, which must be in the form specified in the regulations. Copies of the child's health record, or letters from doctors can not be accepted by the School. Due to changes in immunisation regulations, there are no immunisation services provided in Primary Schools.

### **SCHOOL MEDICAL TEAM**

A school medical officer visits the school each year. Prep children will be tested for any speech, hearing or visual impairment each year. Children with problems identified in previous years are also examined.

On the teacher's recommendation, and with parental approval, children may be checked for speech, hearing, visual or other medical impairment. In all cases, parents are contacted if there are any concerns regarding their child's health.

### **MEDICAL / DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

If your child needs to leave school early for a medical or dental appointment, or for any other reason, please notify your child's class teacher in writing. No child is allowed to go home alone during school hours. Please arrange to have your child picked up, if he or she has an appointment. If a child is to attend an appointment during school hours, parents should collect their child from the class room after completing an early leave pass from the office. It is recommended that medical appointments be made in the afternoon where possible to avoid the morning learning block.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE**

At the beginning of the year meetings are held in order for parents/children/teachers to discuss goals and any other matters concerning their child. This may be about medical history, progress in previous years and so on.

A further Parent/Teacher interview is held mid-year focussing on the strengths and the achievements of the students. Strategies and recommendations for future learning are also discussed. Children are requested to attend the Parent/Teacher/Child interviews where possible. Interviews with class teachers are possible outside formal interview times, but must be arranged out of class time to avoid interruption to classes.



A written report is completed for each student mid year and at the end of the year. These reports are forwarded to parents for their records. Your support and enthusiasm for your child's progress is essential and we welcome the opportunity to meet with parents or hear from you with regard to

your child. Parents are encouraged to email teachers with regard to any matter affecting their child. Email addresses are published at the beginning of each school year.

### **ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH EDUCATION BOARD**

Our Parish Education Board is the principal group directly involved in the provision of education in the Parish.

It offers informed advice to the Parish Priest and the Principal of the Parish School. The Parish Education Board advises on matters such as policy development, financial administration and education in which the Parish is involved.

It represents the various groups involved in education within the Parish. The Principal's report to the Board is published in the newsletter after each meeting.

The Parish Education Board (PEB) has developed a model of operation that is community building:

- It is based on Gospel values
- It is aware of Parish needs
- And is mutually supportive

The Parish Education Board welcomes parents to email with any matters to discuss. The email address is [peb@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:peb@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au)

### **SCHOOL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

The School Community Association (SCA) works to raise money for the school and to organise social activities. Special 'Food Days' are arranged for the children and activities such as Trivia Night and Basket Supper Dance are held to bring our Community together. Morning teas are organised to allow people to meet and catch up with one another.

### **ST. THOMAS' MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE**



The Maintenance Committee is responsible for ensuring an adequate level of general maintenance of our school buildings and grounds is undertaken. It organizes activities such as the mowing of all grassed areas, including the oval, major painting efforts and general landscaping. It arranges Working Bees, for which all school families are rostered and each Working Bee concludes with a Family Barbeque.

The success of the Committee's work is dependent on the attendance of parents at the Working Bees. Parents are encouraged to join the Maintenance Committee each year. There are 4 scheduled working bees throughout the year and parents are encouraged to attend two of these which offset the Working Bee Levy.

### **OTHER PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Apart from these formal bodies, parents are invited to share their interests and talents in the school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in various programs offered by the School. We are interested in hearing from parents who have any special expertise that they would be willing to share within the school. So, if you have any ideas, interests or inspirations, we would appreciate your input.

## **ST. THOMAS' PLAYGROUP**

Parents with Pre-school children (babies and toddlers) are welcome to join St. Thomas' Playgroup, which meets weekly in the St. Thomas' Parish Hall, every Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays (except school holidays), 9.00 am – 11.00 am at \$30.00 per family per term

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENT'S INPUT AND KEEPING COMMUNICATION ACTIVE**

St Thomas prides itself on engaging parents in many ways in the life of the school. Weekly newsletters contain much valuable information on the life of St Thomas the Apostle.

There is one formal interview set mid-year. However, parents are encouraged to be in touch with their teacher as early as possible should an issue arise. We also encourage parents to email teachers as they check their emails daily for correspondence. Should parents ring teachers and they are in class the message is passed onto their message bank and teachers return calls at breaks. Occasionally we may SMS parents about a matter affecting the whole school. Diary dates for the year are sent to families early in term one to help with their planning for the year.

We value parent input and so we welcome comments and advice which we receive from the various bodies that operate at our school. We also encourage parents to contact the Principal or Deputy Principal if there is a matter on their mind. Our belief is that we can help support parent's needs best when we are aware of their concerns.

Annual surveys are forwarded to the school community each year and the results published mid-year. Surveys guide our planning in the future.

The school leadership team works closely with the Principal to discuss and assist in the management of the school. We work collaboratively always putting our annual action plan at the forefront of our expectations for the school.

***COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY TO ALL OUR FAMILIES AND GETTING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK IS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY***

# Information Handbook



Enrichment  
and Care