Dear Parents & Members of Our School Community

Welcome back for the start of the 2016 school year. Welcome to all our new students and their families. We hope your time at St Thomas’ will be rewarding and enjoyable. A warm welcome to all our new Pre-Kindy and Kindy students as well as those students that have joined us in other grades: Alexa Rodrigues, Hannah Patten, Amelia Nguyen, Alex Koh (Pre-Primary), Anthony Chanter, Archie Rhodes, Sophie Patten, (Year One), Alana Nguyen, Juliana Rodrigues (Year Two); Kaleb Corley, Angus Rhodes (Year Four), Yoojung Koh, Olivia Wood, Joshua Gomes, Laura Best (Year Five) Kaideisha Denman-Francis and James Slout (Year Six).

As a staff, we have been looking forward to the beginning of what looks like an exciting year ahead and I must say that as parents you should be very proud of the way your children have settled into their new classes. Not only do they look smart in their school uniforms, but are well organised and very enthusiastic. Congratulations on a great start!

I am sure the first week has been a little hectic for you as you settle into old routines or even the new ones that may pop up with your child moving into a new classroom setting. Please be gentle on yourself over the next week or so until these all fall into place. As always, if you have any issues please make sure you make an appointment and see your child’s teacher as they are willing and eager to help. As Principal I am more than happy to discuss classroom/playground issues that can pop up from time to time but your child’s classroom teacher should always be your first port of call.

Endings

Lord Jesus, you are with us as we commence our year’s work. Help us to understand our importance in educating our children. And bless this partnership between teachers and parents. Guide us in our decisions. And open our hearts in friendship to each other. May we show particular care to those who are most in need. May we be welcoming, especially to those who are new amongst us. And may our union result in many benefits for the children on whose behalf we gather. Amen.

Parish Children’s Masses: The first Parish Children’s Mass of the year will be on Saturday 20 February, commencing at 5.30pm. The Year Two children and their families will be in charge of planning the sausage sizzle and organising raffles of the mass. Mrs Gibbs will be sending details home within the coming week.

P&F Meeting: Please note that the first P&F Meeting of the year will take place on Thursday 18 February in the school hall at 9.00am. It’s always great to see some new faces, so come along and join in the planning for the year ahead. Why not invite another parent to come along with you? Remember many hands make light work. We have a very busy week ahead, as you can see by the information outlined below:

P&F Sundowner: Tomorrow, Friday 5 February, the P&F will be holding their annual Sundowner. This event will begin at 6.00pm and conclude at 10.00pm. This is a fantastic way for our school to come together as a community and welcome new families. As we know community doesn’t just happen and that it is something we have to work together to develop. I would like to thank the P&F Committee for organising the event and look forward to seeing you there.

Parent/Teacher Evening (Pre primary—Year 6): Next Tuesday, 9 February, we will be conducting our Class Information Evening. This will commence with a whole school briefing in the school hall commencing at 6.30pm, where we will begin with a prayer and have a short address on Compassion. All parents are invited to attend this important Mass.

As such, your attendance is expected and very much appreciated.

Ash Wednesday Mass: There will be a whole school Mass next Wednesday 10 February, to mark the start of the Lenten season with Father Wayne distributing ashes to everyone in attendance. The Lenten season is a time of preparation and penance in the 40 days prior to Easter. The children during their religion lessons will not only discuss what Lent is about but will also look at ways they can be involved in the Lenten season such as giving up something i.e. lollies, chocolate, etc or giving something of themselves i.e. helping around the house or donating to Project Compassion. All parents are invited to attend this important Mass.

Staff Commissioning Mass: The staff will be joining colleagues from Catholic schools in the district to celebrate the start of the new school year along with the commissioning of new staff members. The mass will take place at Our Lady of the Rosary, Doubleview commencing at 4.30pm on Tuesday 16 February.

With regards and best wishes

Justin Thoby

Principal

“AIM not for what you are, but for what you could be.”

Lucas Hellmer
Dear Parents,

Welcome Back! It has been great to see all the familiar faces safety back at St Thomas’. A very special welcome to all the ‘new’ faces at our school. We hope you feel welcomed into the wonderful community we have here at St Thomas’.

The beginning of the school year is always busy and especially this year with the earlier Easter date. Ash Wednesday Mass is next Wednesday the 10th of February at 9am in the church. The Year 4 class will be leading the mass and we hope that you can join us.

Ash Wednesday was first introduced to Lent in the late sixth century. The ashes, a sacramental in the church, have ancient significance as symbols of healing and repentance. Today the ashes are the remains of the palms from Palm Sunday last year. We remind ourselves that Lent has begun by having the sign of the Cross marked on our foreheads with the blessed ashes of Ash Wednesday.

Lent is a time that Christians remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert without food. Lent is a wonderful season during our liturgical year to share the concepts of prayer, fasting and almsgiving with our children. Consider as a family how you might help others in need by giving of your time or resources. Even very young children can understand and will enjoy participating in the process. Children may choose to give up a special food, complete tasks (e.g. making their bed) or to improve a behavior (e.g. going to bed on time when asked). Please encourage your child/children to choose their own Lenten sacrifice. Lent is a time when Christians prepare for Easter by thinking about the wrong choices they have made. A ‘good’ Lent brings us a ‘great’ Easter.

This year is the Year (or Jubilee) of Mercy in the church which means it is a special year with a focus, they usually occur every 25 years, the last one was in 2000. This one has been specially requested by Pope Benedict who believes at present we have a pressing need to display more forgiveness and mercy with all that is happening in the world.

Pope Francis says, "We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.

The motto for the year, Merciful like the Father, serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of God who asks us not to judge or condemn but to offer love and forgiveness instead.

God Bless and have a great week.

Nicky Sullivan
Year 4 Teacher/Assistant Principal RE
During a session in our Pupil Free Days last week the staff worked on this document. It was updated and includes input from us all. It shows what we think teaching and learning should be at St Thomas. It also shows that we are continually striving to improve our teaching for the children in our care.

TEACHING AND LEARNING
AT ST THOMAS’

- We have expectations that ALL our children can learn.
- Staff and students are motivated, enthusiastic and passionate.
- We expect a high standard of individualised excellence for staff and students.
- Teaching staff have sound pedagogy, curriculum and content knowledge, including an understanding of the stages of children’s development.
- Literacy Dedicated Time & Numeracy Dedicated Time is structured according to St Thomas’ Literacy and Numeracy Policies.
- Staff are planned, prepared and flexible.
- Student learning is based on individual needs and interests.
- Higher order thinking skills are integrated into classroom programs.
- Metacognition is essential for both staff and students.
- Routines are established and maintained.
- Contemporary learning spaces cater for the curriculum and individual student needs.
- Classrooms are nurturing, safe and inclusive.
- Positive relationships are developed and nurtured between students, parents and staff.

Jenny Kell
Hello Parents

I am looking for volunteers for canteen duty on Mondays. If you can spare half an hour to help with giving out the lunch orders, please email Nat Bogoias at: natalie.bogoias@gmail.com.

Thank You!

St Thomas Pick up & Drop off

Before and after school: all drivers are asked to use College Road from one direction only – i.e. approaching from Warden Street. This facilitates a continuous flow of left-turning vehicles from College Road into the set-down/pick-up area. Children both leave and board vehicles from the left-side doors near the paved or undercover areas, and drivers can then proceed through the exit gates, turn left into College Road, and proceed towards Melville Street. Traffic flow therefore moves safely in an anti-clockwise direction around the school at these peak times.

Uniform Shop News

Are your shorts too short, shirts too grey, or there are too few pairs of decent socks in the drawer?? Has your child grown unbelievably over the summer? Then come and see us in the hall on Friday next week - 12th February from 8.15 - 9.00.

If you can’t make it in then pick up an order form from the front office, or print the form off the school’s website. Give the form and the correct money/cheque in an envelope to the front office. We will process your order within two weeks and deliver the items to your child’s classroom.

Second-hand items - stocks are very low. If you have items that are in good condition but no longer needed by your family then please donate them back to the Uniform Shop. Please leave these good quality, laundered items to the front office and then we can provide a second hand service to the school. All funds are proceeds to the school’s P and F.

Early Childhood T-shirts - we have a small excess stock of these t-shirts available for purchase, in sizes 2, 4 and 6. Come and see us for your Pre-kind, Kindy or Pre-primary child.

See you Friday 12th Feb

P and F Uniform Shop Team
Judy, Kim, Netina and Nicola

Looking for Soul Food? The Centre for Faith Enrichment is offering two short online courses in Term One. (1) Encountering Jesus Anew in the Year of Mercy: Tuesdays 16th February – 8th March, 12pm-1pm, $20; (2) Dive Deeper: Exploring Faith: Tuesdays 23rd February – 8th March, 8pm-8.30pm, $15. For more information or to register, visit www.cfe.org.au or call 9241 5221. These courses are a great opportunity to explore matters of the soul in a relaxed and friendly way, with no exams or assignments! ALL welcome!
Our deepest condolences to Jacob, Sophia, Yasmin, Carmen and Mark on the sad passing of their beloved father, father-in-law & grandfather.

Please keep the Jones' family in your prayers.

STUDENT UPDATE

Monday your eldest child will be sent home with a sheet entitled

FULL FAMILY DETAILS

Please check over the details, make any changes clearly in pen, sign & return to the front office. If no changes are required please sign & return.

(New students where we have full details will not be sent forms at this time)

Forms need to be returned by THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY

Thank you

Netball

is available locally at Matthews Netball Centre, Wembley, for Years 3-6 and is played on Saturday mornings.

St Thomas has fielded 2 teams in the last few years. If you are interested in registering your child, or your class is interested in registering a team – contact Liz Moore for a registration form and / or more details.

We need to nominate our team (s) by 12th March so I need to have enough numbers by this date or we don’t have a team. If we miss this deadline there is no chance of fielding a team this season. We have the choice of fielding a year 5/6 or just a year 5 team or 3/4 or 4/5 team depending on numbers.

The season starts on Saturday 7th May for year 5/6 and Saturday 14th May for year 3/4

The season finishes on 27th August for year 5/6 and 13th August for year 3/4

There is a break over the school holidays.

I am also after a coach for the teams, so any parents out there with skills in this area, let me know

Thanks

Liz Moore
elizabeth.m.moore@icloud.com
Netball Co-ordinator for St Thomas

Occupational Therapy

In 2016 St Thomas’ will be undertaking a trial with Dove Occupational Therapy to offer onsite pediatric OT services and intervention. A detailed pamphlet, which outlines some of the services on offer, has been included in the latter pages of this newsletter.
TERM PLANNERS

Term Planners have been placed on the home website for each term this year. Please remember that dates and events are subject to change. The Term Planners will be updated each Thursday to keep them as up-to-date as possible each week.

Tissues

Please remember to bring 2 boxes of tissues per child. These can be left in your child’s class.

Thank you

P&F NEWS

The annual welcoming Sundowner is on this Friday the 5th starting at 6:00pm and finishing at 10:00pm.

At 6:30pm we will bless our school. Parents are asked to pray together a short prayer of blessing over our teachers. The words will be given to you on the night.

This is definitely a kid free night (newborns excepted). Pre-primary - Year 4 are asked to bring a finger food plate of something savoury to share and Years 5 & 6 something sweet.

There is a $20 donation for existing families and drinks are provided by the P & F. A special invitation is extended to all new families, come along as our guests.

There will be a roster at the bar to serve drinks.

Also

The First P&F Meeting for the year will be on Thursday 18 February at 9:00am. Please note it is a morning meeting and will finish promptly at 10:00am.

Please come to the hall after you have dropped your kids off, grab a cup of tea or coffee from the canteen on your way.
Dear Parents,

In its ongoing commitment to offering a broad range of supportive measures to its students, St Thomas has entered into a trial partnership with Dove Occupational Therapy. Dove OT is a paediatric occupational therapy practice specialising in the assessment and intervention of children.

Dove OT is pleased to offer onsite occupational therapy screening and intervention for children attending St Thomas Primary School. If your kindy/pre primary/year one child is experiencing difficulties in any of the below areas, a screening assessment may be of benefit:

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Perceptual/cognitive Skills
- Sensory Processing/attention
- Self-care

If any of the above areas are a cause for concern for your child, have a confidential talk to your child’s class teacher who will be able to indicate whether a screening would be of benefit or please contact us, we are always happy to have a confidential chat and provide some direction.

Please note OT is claimable through private health depending on your level of cover.

If you are interested in occupational therapy and how it could assist your child, or would like to find out more please visit our website www.otdove.com.au

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to call me on 0403 272 158/6142 7608 or email me at melisdove@gmail.com

Warm regards,

Melissa Dove