



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

1st September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

WELCOME BACK 2025-2026!

I do hope you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful summer holiday break and made the most of the time together to explore new places and experience new adventures! Whether you have jetted off to exotic destinations, explored locations within our wonderful British Isles or enjoyed a number of short breaks closer to home or days out, I hope you feel you have made the most of the time away from school and feel refreshed and ready for the beginning of the new academic year 2025-2026!

The end of the summer holidays can bring a range of emotions for both adults and children, from excitement for the adventures that lie ahead to anticipation for new challenges that await. It is also a time when a touch of worry may arise as everyone readjusts to the routines of school life. To address these aspects effectively, this letter aims to update and remind you ahead of the return to school on **Wednesday 3rd September 2025**. Those of you who have children starting in EYFS/Reception will be aware of your slightly different phased return as previously communicated to you.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Structure

Many of you will be familiar with the term 'Senior Leadership Team'. These are identified individuals across our primary school who hold positions involving additional responsibilities and levels of accountability. This hierarchy in school should help you identify who you may need to talk to and how this can be escalated should the need arise. Initial day-to-day contact and questions/queries will always start with your child's classteacher, who will know your children best and will have the professional knowledge, skills and understanding to address any initial worries or concern.

The Senior Leadership Structure of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is as follows:

Mr Dean Moran	Headteacher
Mrs Carrie Coughtrey	Deputy Headteacher (non-teaching)
Mrs Chloe Moran	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)
Mrs Hilary Forder	School Business Manager
Mr Tom Beales	EYFS/Reception Team Leader
Mrs Sophie Antrobus	Key Stage 1 Team Leader (Year 1 & 2)
Mrs Mel Pritchard	Lower Key Stage 2 Team Leader (Year 3 & 4)
Mrs Sarah McKechnie	Upper Key Stage 2 Team Leader (Year 5 & 6)

Attendance & Punctuality

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is dedicated to supporting strong attendance for our children so that they receive an excellent education. The benefits of being in school are numerous. However, the pandemic disrupted attendance habits, and many schools

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Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9BX

Telephone: 01277 223651 admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk www.stthomaspri.org

Headteacher: Mr D. M. Moran



**BRENTWOOD COLLABORATIVE
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including us are facing more challenges than ever in supporting children to be in school. We are working exceptionally hard in response to this challenge.

We know that children fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. We want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our children in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success. We also know that **you** as parent/carers can have a significant effect on reducing absences and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that your child attends school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes.

Our whole school attendance target each year is **96+%**. Last academic year we achieved **94.5%** which is not good enough!!

At our recent Full Governing Body meeting, the Governors approved and ratified our new **Pupil Attendance Policy** for September 2025. This is now available from the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and can be found via the homepage by clicking on 'Key Information' → 'School Policies'.

This academic year 2025-2026 we will be working with **Aquinas School Attendance Provisions** who will be undertaking school visits each half term to track and monitor our attendance data. They will also be conducting face-to-face school-based attendance meetings with parents/carers of children who we deem to have concerns about their irregular school attendance. Aquinas will offer support first based strategies to help improve poor absence rates, before exploring more legislative options including the issuing of penalty notices.

Primary School Main School Office

The **Main School Office** for all parents/carers is situated at the Key Stage 2 end of the school, which is accessed via the steps to the main entrance to the primary school. This is now clearly signposted with a sign above the door to make it more obvious to parents/carers and visitors where to go! Here you will see familiar faces as Mrs Giddings, Mrs Pallett and Mrs Dansey who will be on hand to answer your questions, receive notes and information and provide the service you are used to. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience and are always happy to assist.

Finance Office

Over the summer holiday period we have moved and relocated the Finance Office to bring the whole of the administrative team into one area of the school. The Finance Office is now adjacent to the Main School Office. This will help us improve efficiency and allow for more seamless communication between finance and admin managed and overseen by the School Business Manager. The old Finance Office has now been decommissioned and there are no staff situated in this room. The old reception hatch has been filled in and the room is being repurposed for intervention work in supporting our children across the school.

Therefore the old Finance Office entrance is no longer operational and no parents/carers or visitors will be able to gain access from this area. It is now strictly for staff use only.

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If your child arrives late for school whether in EYFS, KS1 or KS2 you **MUST** go to the Main School Office – there is no alternative entrance in to school. From here a member of the administrative team will record your child's late arrival and then escort them to their classroom taking them through the primary school. You will not be asked to gain access via any other entrance as before. Similarly, if you are collecting your child early from school you must use the Main School Office only.

Arrival & End of School Day

The arrival for the start of the school day is UNCHANGED. Please continue to use the two designated entrances/exits off Sawyers Hall Lane when arriving for school. All parents/carers must use the one-way loop system to allow us to safely, quickly and efficiently get the children in to school and parents/carers off site to get on with your busy days! If you are an EYFS and/or KS1 parent/carer and need to gain access to the Main School Office, you will need to safely cross the car park and use the pedestrian pathway down to the office. Please be mindful of vehicles that may be moving in the staff car park and KS2 parents/carers who will be exiting the school premises.

Over the course of the summer holidays, Mr Powis (Caretaker) has refreshed the crossing points within the school car park with new zebra crossing markings. These safety measures have been installed to keep pedestrians and vehicle users safe and must be used at all times. Please **DO NOT** cut across the car park anywhere else and ducking under the vehicle barrier is strictly prohibited. We want to ensure everyone on our school site is safe. If at any point you are authorised to use the school car park, I would like to remind you that there is a **5mph** speed limit – this applies to everybody!!

If you arrive late for school after the gates have been shut, (8:55a.m.) you will need to press the buzzer (call button) for the Main School Office from the pedestrian entrance. Please do not buzz for entry to the school car park as access is strictly prohibited for late arrivals. The car park is for staff and official visitors only.

Please be reminded that the end of the school day is **3:25p.m.** The pedestrian gates on Sawyers Hall Lane will not be opened by Mr Powis until 3:15p.m. to allow access for parents/carers on to the school site. Once these are open, you are welcome to make your way to your child's dismissal/collection point.

Contact Details

The telephone number for St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is:

 **01277 223651**

To save you time, please save the above number in your contacts.

The school email address is:

 admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk

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If you attempt to use previous email addresses for the former Infant or Junior School, you will receive an automated response asking you to send it to the above address – it WILL NOT be automatically forwarded. Again, please adjust your records and email systems/contacts to reflect this update.

Parent Hub & Website

This is our main method of communicating with the school community. The system is quick and easy and helps us communicate more effectively and efficiently with parents/carers.

If you are new to the school and have not yet joined Parent Hub, you will need to join as soon as possible! To do so, open the Parent Hub app and click on the 'Add a School' option. When you are asked to enter the handle please use:

@stthomaspri

If you have any difficulty accessing or joining Parent Hub then please contact the School Office who will be happy to assist. We would love to have 100% of our families joined up so you do not miss out!

We also have our primary school website which is a good source of information.

www.stthomaspri.org

Staffing Update

I am delighted to share with you the wonderful news that **Mrs Katie Knight** has informed us that she is pregnant and expecting her first child in January 2026. This is wonderful and exciting news and I am sure you will join me in congratulating Mrs Knight and her husband on this announcement. We are currently ensuring that we have all the relevant risk assessments in place to keep Mrs Knight safe in and around school and starting the process of preparing for her maternity leave later in the academic year (January). Over the course of this term the Governing Body and senior leadership team will start the process of finding maternity cover for Mrs Knight's classteacher role in school ready for the spring term 2026.

As this new academic year gets under way, I am sure you will join me in welcoming **Miss Stone** to our teaching team. Miss Stone will be joining the Upper KS2 Team and teaching in Year 5 (5AS).

Over the summer holiday period we have also said goodbye to **Miss Denisa Dinea** who has left our team of Midday Assistants.

Premises Updates

Whilst you have all been away from school for the summer holiday our premises staff have been working incredibly hard to make sure our school is clean, well maintained, safe and provides the best learning environment we can for your children and staff. I cannot begin to explain or describe how hard the premises staff have worked and the school premises we have, both inside and out, are a credit to them! I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr Powis (Caretaker) and his team of Mrs Powis, Mrs Dansey and Mrs Goodsell – they are amazing! Mr Smith has also lent a hand too this summer to assist with some of the bigger projects!

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Following the resubmission of our **Voluntary Aided School Capital Allowance (VASCA)** funding bid earlier this year, we have now been successful in gaining funding for a covered walkway/corridor via this capital programme. The total project cost is estimated at just over £150,000 which includes a 10% Governor Liability contribution. The project is due to go to tender at the beginning of the autumn term with an anticipated start date of the October half term. The aim of the project is to provide a new internal/external corridor space that will improve circulation within the primary school, where historically we were two separate buildings. This will not only improve efficiency but also provide greater security for children and staff transferring and travelling between EYFS/KS1 and KS2. This is an exciting project and well overdue.

As well as a successful VASCA bid we have also secured additional funding via the **Local Authority Inclusion Framework** (£80K) for a SEND Resource Unit (Sensory Cabin). Over the summer holiday period this additional learning environment has been moving at pace and many of you will have spotted the new 'Sensory Cabin' which has been constructed in the corner of the school field. The cabin has been fully fitted out with sensory equipment to provide a calm and structured environment which can be used by children to access an identified and planned sensory experience and also provide a safe and stimulating break out space. This project, supported and endorsed by the Governing Body, has been led and managed by our SENCo and SENCo Support Assistant. It is a much-needed addition to our school SEND provision.

The staff and I look forward to welcoming you back to St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 – don't be late!!

Yours sincerely,

Dean Moran
Headteacher