

CONTACT

No. 1699 – Friday 5th September 2025

Dear Students, Parents and Staff,

Welcome back! We hope that you have all enjoyed a safe and restful summer break. As we step into the new school year, we've been excited to see our students return, ready to embrace new challenges and opportunities of the new academic year. We welcome particularly all staff, students and their parents, who are new to the school particularly in Year 7 and 12 and hope that they all settle quickly into life at St Thomas More.

As we come to the end of the first full week of this new school year, we would urge you develop the habit of reading our weekly Contact newsletter, which provides our readers with important information, events, reminders and updates about our school and wider Catholic community in the various sections.

We hope that as a team and family of St Thomas More, we continue to work together in committed partnership to ensure everyone has productive and successful year, and we look forward to working closely with you to support your child's journey.

Parent Reminders and Student Information

Term Dates: Please find the [Term Dates 2025-26](#).

Absence: If your child is unwell and unable to attend, please notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school and selecting attendance

or by emailing attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk



If the absence lasts more than one day, please update the school daily. Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school

hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. You can request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances by through school gateway or alternatively email attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk or by collecting a form from Reception. Please keep medical evidence of absence eg appointment cards or letters, copies of prescriptions, pharmacy receipts etc in case you need them to provide more details on your child's return to school.

Changes to Contact Details: If you have moved house, changed your email address, mobile telephone number or work contact number, etc. over the summer holiday, **please remember you can make these changes via your child's [School Gateway](#) account.**

Student Medical Conditions: Please ensure school is made aware of any updates regarding students medical conditions, particularly if they can potentially have an impact on their time in school and require support. Please contact Mrs Walford mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk if you wish to discuss your case in detail.

Mobile Phones: A reminder of the rules for mobile phones for **ALL** year groups 7 - 13:

*As in previous years, the rules for mobile phones in school remains the same mobile phones should not be brought into school. However, the decision to provide your child with a mobile phone to give parents/cares reassurance that they can contact their child whilst travelling alone on public transport or journeys to and from school, is made on the understanding that the mobile should be **switched off completely** whilst at school, not merely silenced or on divert or vibrate.*

To reduce the risk of theft or loss during the school day, students who carry mobile phones must keep them concealed, not advertise that they have them, and mark them clearly with their name.

St Thomas More, the Governing Body and school staff accept no responsibility for replacing mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged whilst on the school premises, or on school sponsored functions.

St Thomas More, the Governing Body and school staff accept no responsibility for students who lose or have mobile phones stolen whilst travelling to and from school.

If a student is seen with, or using a mobile phone on school premises, the phone will be confiscated to a secure place in school and returned at the end of the school day and a letter will be sent home on a first offence. If a student breaks this rule again, the phone will be confiscated to a secure place in school, parents/carers will be informed who then may collect the phone during office hours. The phone will not be returned to the student. Repeated infringements would be seen as a breach of the Student Behaviour Policy and sanctions may follow.

It is understood that parents/carers accept this change of practice unless they contact the school directly to express their non-acceptance.

A reminder that, during PE practical lessons, valuables, including mobile phones, should be placed in the tray which is made available to students at the start of every lesson. It would also be advisable not to bring an expensive phone into school.

Considerate Parking: Thank you for your support and understanding when learning our routines for dropping and collecting students at school, this half term is a busy one and extracurricular clubs and trips are numerous thanks to our dedicated staff. Please **do not use school carparks** for dropping off in the morning or picking up at the end of the school day. The closest collection point is behind the fire station. Cars that attempt to drive in at the end of the day cause congestion and are a hazard. Please remember that this exit is also the main pedestrian exit from the school. If using the local area to park, please be considerate to our neighbours and local community. **Please do not 'drive by' to try and drop off or pick up or use surrounding roads** which get congested. Thank you for your co-operation.

After school activities and fixtures: if you are collecting your child from a fixture or activity after school, please do not park in the double bays at the front of the school and block other cars in.

Individual School Photos: take place on Wednesday 10th September for Yrs. 7, 9, 11&12 students.

KS3 Information Evening: takes place on Thursday 11th September at 6pm, parents/carers should have received an email with full details.

Prayer of the Week

'Calm my Mind' prayer

Merciful God, thank you that I am never alone,
your presence calms the troubled sea of my life and speaks peace to my soul.

When I am filled with anxiety and uncertainty about my studies,
would you calm my fears and fill my mind with your peace.

Give me assurance that you are working everything for my good and your glory.

May your love be the passion in my heart.

May your joy be my strength when times are hard.

May your presence be my peace that overflows.

AMEN

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 14:25-33



This week we hear from the Holy Gospel according to Luke. In this Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of the cost of being His follower in no uncertain terms. He is very clear that our devotion to Him should be our highest priority. This weekend, on Sunday 7th October 2025, Pope Leo XIV will canonise two young men - meaning he is declaring them as Saints, saying that the Church believes them to be in heaven. These men are Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and Blessed Carlo Acutis. Both of them were young men who found ways of balancing their priorities. Pier Giorgio was an avid mountain climber, loved film and theatre, and enjoyed a fruitful social life. He also protested against policies that threatened human dignity, fed the poor, and was dedicated to the Mass from a very young age.

Of the two of them, Blessed Carlo Acutis is likely more relatable to most people now. Referred to as the 'Patron Saint of the Internet', Carlo was a 15-year-old who loved computers, sport, and video games. He also found time to feed the homeless, attend Mass and Adoration every day that he could, and to be one of his parish catechists (someone who teaches the faith). Carlo was a shining example of someone who could focus their priorities. He would regulate the amount of time he played games, he would incorporate his love for technology into his faith and education, and he would look at the bigger picture in any given situation so that he could properly evaluate his priorities on a continuous basis.

It can be difficult to properly order our priorities in life, and it can be even more difficult to do it right now after the summer holidays as we start to return to a schedule where priorities are very important. This week lets look to the two new saints for inspiration while we use the message of the Gospel to properly order what is most important to us during this academic year.

Max Morris, Lay Chaplain

Chaplaincy News

A Welcome from the Chaplaincy team: Max and Mr Kwasnica would like to welcome all the new students to our school. We celebrated on Wednesday with Services and Liturgies to the new students in years 7 and 12. We are looking forward to celebrating Mass with year 7 next week.






Group prayer in the school chapel: We are continuing our schedule of group prayers in the chapel before and after school. This includes the Morning Divine office at 08:15AM, a 3 minute reflection (Loyola Press) at 08:30AM, Evening Divine office at 3:35PM, and Adoration once a week on Thursdays after school. Please come and join us, if you're unsure on what these prayers entail, please speak to Max (the Lay Chaplain).

Our Assisi Catholic Trust Family

Schools	Parishes
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary school and nursery	Our Lady of Lourdes and St Joseph Msgr Kevin Hale https://lourdesleigh.org/
St George's Catholic Primary School	St. George and The English Martyrs Fr. Brett http://www.saintgeorgeschurch.co.uk/
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary school and nursery	Sacred Heart of Jesus Fr. Graham Sacred Heart and John Fisher – the Catholic Parish of Southend-on-Sea and Prittlewell
St. Helen's Catholic Primary School	Our Lady Help of Christians and Saint Helen Fr. Alex Saint Helen's Catholic Church Westcliff Southend-on-sea
St Joseph's Catholic Primary school	Our Lady of Canvey and English Martyrs Fr. Eamonn http://www.ourladyofcanvey.org/
Holy Family Catholic Primary School	Holy Family and St Thomas More Fr. Eduard Home (holyfamily-church.uk)
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School	Our Lady of Ransom Fr Paul Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Church
St Teresa's Catholic Primary school	Catholic Church of St. Teresa and the Child Jesus Fr. Gerry Home - St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Rochford
St Thomas More High School	St. Peter's Fr. Jeff https://stpetereastwood.org/

Spotlight on Wellbeing and Keeping Safe

Please don't forget that staff are here for you and your children, and you can get in touch with Mrs Walford via welfare@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk if you need some support. Parental factsheets on various topics are available on our website under the Safeguarding section, [Parent Fact Sheets \(st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk\)](http://st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

 The start of term can bring a rollercoaster of feelings for children – and for adults too! Whether children have started Year 7 or a new school, a little support can make all the difference  This week's #WakeUpWednesday guide shares ten top tips to help children feel calmer and more prepared for going back to school. From practical routines to emotional support, it's a must-read for easing those first-week nerves! 



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Returning to school after the summer holidays can be both exciting and daunting for children of all ages. Different routines, classes, schools, and academic pressures can cause anxiety or uncertainty. Parents play a vital role in easing this transition. This guide will help you support your child emotionally, mentally, and practically as they return to school.

- 1 RE-ESTABLISH ROUTINES**
Gradually shift back to school-time routines a week or two before term starts. Regular bedtimes, wake-up times, and mealtimes can help children feel more secure and reduce the shock of change when school begins. Having a routine creates predictability and stability, helping to reduce anxiety while improving sleep and concentration.
- 2 TALK ABOUT FEELINGS**
Encourage open conversations with children about their feelings. Ask them how they feel about returning to school, such as what they're looking forward to and anything they might be feeling unsure or worried about. Validating their emotions can help reduce anxiety and show them it's okay to talk about their emotional wellbeing.
- 3 SUPPORT WITH SLEEP**
Children need adequate sleep for concentration, brain function, memory, and emotional regulation. Establish a wind-down routine without screens at least an hour before bed, and encourage relaxing activities like reading or listening to calming music.
- 4 LOOK OUT FOR SIGNS**
Some children hide their anxiety. Watch for changes in their behaviour, such as withdrawal, stomach aches, and irritability. If worries persist, speak with their teacher or the pastoral team early to ensure your child receives support.
- 5 REFRESH SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**
Help children reconnect with school friends by arranging playdates or video chats in the week before school starts. Familiar faces and social interactions help the transition and provide emotional comfort on that first day back.
- 6 CREATE A CALM MORNING**
Mornings set the tone for the day. Plan ahead with a consistent morning routine that allows time for breakfast, getting dressed, and talking calmly about the day. Avoid last-minute rushing to reduce stress for everyone.
- 7 FOCUS ON POSITIVES**
Talk about the fun and interesting parts of school – seeing friends, favourite subjects, or exciting activities. One simple but powerful change parents can make is swapping "How's your day been?" for "What's been good about your day?" This invites more of a positive, open response. Focusing on positives can help shift children's anxious thoughts and reframe school as a safe and engaging place.
- 8 VISIT OR VISUALISE SCHOOL**
If possible, encourage visits to the school grounds before the first day, especially if it's a new school. Walking the route or even looking at photos of classrooms and teachers can make the environment feel familiar. The school website is always a great go-to place for this. This is particularly helpful for younger children or those with additional needs.
- 9 PLAN AHEAD TOGETHER**
Involve children in preparing for school – buying supplies, packing their bag, or choosing lunch options. This gives them a sense of control and builds excitement. Use checklists or calendars to prepare together, helping reduce last-minute stress.
- 10 STAY POSITIVE AND PRESENT**
Children pick up on your outlook. Stay calm, positive, and present, especially during drop-offs. Avoid lingering goodbyes, and let them know you'll be there at pick-up. A consistent, reassuring presence builds their confidence and resilience.

Meet Our Expert
This guide was created by Jo Morton-Brown, an Emotional Health Practitioner with nearly 15 years' experience supporting children and young people's mental health. She produces uplifting YouTube content for pupils and trains adults to better support young people's wellbeing, with a mission to help every child feel valued and understand their emotions.

 **WakeUp Wednesday** 

Departmental News

Our Amazon Wishlist! Friends, family and alumni can donate directly to the school library. We still accept preloved copies from home you may wish to donate, but student and departmental requests for library stock can be found here.



The book wish list is chosen and updated by the Library team as texts that benefit the student's reading comprehension, engagement with the curriculum and foster an interest in reading. If students have overdue library books, you should have received an overdue notice and may be charged an overdue fee per book via Gateway. To have the overdue notice removed, students can return the book, pay the fee, or replace the missing book with a new copy.

Food Tech September Extended Learning Challenge: Throughout September, we will be taking part in Snack-tember, an initiative from the British Nutrition Foundation, which promotes healthier, more sustainable snacking for children and young people aged 5-16 years. We want our young people to choose and make snacks that have:

- MORE vegetables and fruit
- MORE wholegrains, beans and pulses
- LESS saturated fat, salt and sugars

To kick start this year I would love to see photos of healthy snacks you make this month.

I always love to see what students have been independently cooking at home so make sure they take a photo and either come and show me in Food Tech or email to smnapper@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk and they will get a certificate and merit.

Mrs Napper

(Food Technology teacher)



MFL Department's Word and Idiomatic Expression of the Week:

Seguir al pie de la letra

Ardilla

(ahr-dee-yah)

Feminine Noun

Literal translation in English: To follow something to the foot of the letter

When do we use it?: To follow something exactly as instructed (to the T)

Ejemplo: Es importante seguir al pie de la letra esas instrucciones.
(It is important to follow these instructions to the letter.)

En inglés: Squirrel

Ejemplo: Dos ardillas estaban peleando por una bellota en el patio.

(Two squirrels were fighting over an acorn in the yard.)



The September Celebrity Linguist Spotlight:



Name: J. K. Rowling, CH, OBE, HonFRSE, FRCPE, FRSL

Career: Author, philanthropist, film producer, television producer and screenwriter.

Languages spoken: English, French and Portuguese.

Her knowledge of other languages is evident in the fabricated words that she included in her Harry Potter stories. Examples are Beauxbatons, which means beautiful wands, Fleur Delacour from 'fleur' meaning 'flower' and 'de la cour' meaning 'of the court' and Malfoy from the French phrase 'mal foi' meaning 'bad faith'.



Aspire: online resources for all things careers/universities and apprenticeships, great for those not sure of the opportunities after GCSE's (POST 16) and A levels (POST 18). Click to find out more [The Aspire Guide - Flipbook - Page 1 \(paperturn-view.com\)](http://www.paperturn-view.com)



CAREERS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a collation of all the opportunities we have heard about from employers and universities. Please use the links included to read more information and apply to anything you are interested in. Links are underlined.

Careers Newsletter can be found [here](#).

**Become a
youth leader**

Southend and Rochford Cadet Group urgently require new Youth Leaders and Youth Helpers. Can you help?
Contact name: Nicole Gansbuhler
Email address: nicole.gansbuhler@sja.org.uk

Apply now at sja.org.uk/youthteam

St John Ambulance

Poetry Corner No.74 Otherwise

I got out of bed
on two strong legs.
It might have been
otherwise. I ate
cereal, sweet
milk, ripe, flawless
peach. It might
have been otherwise.
I took the dog uphill
to the birch wood.
All morning I did
the work I love.

At noon I lay down
with my mate. It might
have been otherwise.
We ate dinner together
at a table with silver
candlesticks. It might
have been otherwise.
I slept in a bed
in a room with paintings
on the walls, and
planned another day
just like this day.
But one day, I know,
it will be otherwise.

Jane Kenyon

[JANE KENYON reads "Otherwise"](#)

PE Fixtures

DATE	FIXTURE
8/9/2025	Year 7 A/D/G Football Trial - 3:30pm-5pm Year 7 P/S/V Basketball Trial - 3:30pm-5pm
9/9/2025	Year 7 P/S/V Football Trial - 3:30pm-5pm Year 7 A/D/G Basketball Trial - 3:30pm-5pm
10/9/2025	Year 8 Football v Eastwood (HOME) 4pm
11/9/2025	Year 10 House Football - 3:30pm-5pm
12/9/2025	No Fixtures
15/9/2025	Year 8 House Basketball - 3:30pm-5pm
16/9/2025	Year 8 A/B/C Football v Southend High (HOME) 4pm kick off Year 10 A/B Football v Southend High (AWAY) 4pm kick off - Return 5:30pm
17/9/2025	Year 9 A & B Football v Southend High (HOME) 4pm kick off Year 11 Football v Southend High (HOME) 4pm kick off
18/9/2025	Year 7 A/B/C/D Football v Southend High (AWAY) 4pm - Return 5:30pm Year 10 Football v Westcliff High (HOME) 4pm kick off
19/9/2025	No Fixtures

PE Extra-curricular Timetable – Autumn Term

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
7.45 - 8.30 am	Year 7-10 Basketball (RHE)	Year 8/9 Gym (JEN) Rackets Club (All Years) (RHE)	Year 10-13 Gym (SB) Year 7-10 Indoor Athletics (AAC)	Darts Club (All years) (SB) Year 8/9 Futsal (JEN) Year 10-13 Gym (LSH)	Year 11-13 Basketball (SB) Year 10-13 Gym (EK)
1.35 - 2.25pm	All Years Athletics - Back Field (JEN) Year 7 Basketball (JTB) Year 10 Astro (NSP)	Darts Clubs (All years) (SB) Year 10/11 Basketball (RHE/AWI) Year 9 Astro (JTB)	Year 8 Astro (JEN) Year 9 Basketball (SB) Year 9-11 Gym (NSP) Year 7-9 Rugby - Backfield (RHE)	Year 7 Astro (LSH) Year 11 Basketball (AWI)	Year 8 Basketball (JEN) Year 11 Astro (TH)
3.30 - 4.45pm	Year 7 Football - A + B Team (LSH) FIXTURES	Year 12/13 Basketball (SB) Yr7-9 Rugby (AAC & EwM) FIXTURES	Year 8 Football - A + B Team Training (JEN) FIXTURES	Badminton Club (All Years) (SB) FIXTURES	Week 1 - Year 9 'A' Team football training (MH/AH) Week 2 - Year 9 Open football training (MH/AH) Indoor Athletics (AAC) FIXTURES