

CONTACT

No. 1700 – Friday 12th September 2025



As we wrap up the second week of the new school term, we are thrilled to see everyone settling in so well. The energy around the school has been fantastic, with students and teachers diving into their lessons and activities with enthusiasm! We give thanks to those parents in Years 7&8 who were able to join us last night for our 'How to be a St Thomas More student' evening.

This week's newsletter is full of updates on weekly highlights, upcoming events, and reminders as we continue to build momentum for a successful term. Whether you've already hit your stride or are still adjusting, know that we are here to support every step of the way. Let's keep up the great work and make this term one to remember!

Friends of St Thomas More (FOSTM) Meeting – Tuesday 16th September 6.30pm

The Friends of St Thomas More (FOSTM) are a group of fantastic volunteers who work tirelessly in the background to raise money for our school. They will be holding their first meeting of the year on Tuesday this week in the school library. If you would like to be involved in supporting the school as a part of this fantastic group, please come along. If you would like more information, please email Mrs Hardiman (ahardiman@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk).



Past Student News: former student Joshua Lamb was one of the latest cohort of Essex Police Officers passing out at Essex Police headquarters on Friday 5th September, and looks forward to starting his first posting this month. Well done Joshua!

Prayer of the Week

Prayer for Peace – St. John Paull II

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace, who are Yourself our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, "Peace to you" – please grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice and brotherly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.
May all peoples on the earth become as brothers and sisters.

May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all. Amen.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

John 3:13-17

Artwork: Exaltation of the True Cross (1603-1605) by Adam Elsheimer



This week we hear from the Holy Gospel according to St John. It's a segment of one of the most famous parts in the Bible a conversation our Lord Jesus Christ has with a man called Nicodemus. In the portion of the conversation we hear this week Lord Jesus references our first reading, a time when Moses is in the desert and is instructed to make a bronze serpent on a pole which he is to show to the Israelites who have been bitten by a snake, healing them. On the surface this might seem like an odd thing to do, but what likely seems even more strange is the feast day we are celebrating on Sunday, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Why would we celebrate the instrument used to kill the second person of the Most Holy Trinity? The Cross, once a sign of shame, became a throne of victory. This sacrifice became the bridge between heaven and earth. It's only when we look past the surface that we can see why we celebrate this feast day.

This feast invites us to look beneath the surface in our own lives, too. We all have many things that seem like burdens in our lives; discipline, extended learning, projects at work, chores at home,

even work or school uniforms – they might seem like pointless inconvenience at times but more often than not they are intended to help us grow, to teach us, and to push us forward to achieving greater things. The same goes for people in our lives. Some might seem cold, quiet, annoying, or difficult in some way. But when we look below the surface we might see hurt, shyness, loneliness, or even a hidden talent just waiting to be noticed. The Cross teaches us to look deeper. It teaches us that with God nothing is meaningless, everything can be redeemed. Let's all pray that we can learn to open our eyes, to see love when we once thought there were only rules or nagging. To find meaning where we once only felt frustration. To not only grow in understanding of the Cross, but for all the small things in our own lives.

Max Morris, Lay Chaplain

Chaplaincy News

First school Mass of the academic year: This week Fr Jeff celebrated Mass for the whole of year 7. I would like to thank Fr Jeff, the choir, the band, and our servers for all they do. I would also like to thank our readers, these students volunteered to read in front of their whole year group for their first Mass in our school, this took a lot of courage and they read and spoke very well. It was fantastic to work alongside them and the whole of 7P who assisted in the writing of our Bidding Prayers and other Mass preparations.



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/

Vacancies:

Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Benfleet, Essex – Headteacher to start April 2026 – <https://assiscatholictrust.com/>
 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Canvey Island, Essex – LSA - [St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Nursery - Vacancies](#)

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.

16–19 Bursary Fund – Support for Sixth Form Students



The Government's **16–19 Bursary Fund** is available to help students stay in education by covering costs such as travel, meals, books, equipment, and trips. There are two types of bursaries:

- **Vulnerable Student Bursary** – up to £1,200 for young people in care, care leavers, or those receiving certain benefits.
- **Discretionary Bursary** – for students facing financial hardship, awarded by the school based on household income and individual need.

To apply, parents/students should complete the bursary application form (available from the Sixth Form office or school website) and provide supporting evidence. For full details and eligibility, visit: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund If you have questions or need help with the application, please contact our Sixth Form office.

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 \(st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk\)](https://www.st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

With over 60% of children and young people regularly feeling overwhelmed, it's never been more important to support them in managing stress as they head back to school. This week's #WakeUpWednesday guide highlights 10 top tips – from spotting early signs to encouraging healthy sleep patterns – that can make a meaningful difference  Designed for parents and educators alike, the guide outlines how small, everyday actions can help young people feel more in control. It's a valuable resource to keep stress in check and nurture emotional resilience 



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

- 1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS**
Look out for changes in mood, behaviour or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.
- 2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING**
Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.
- 3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY**
Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.
- 4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS**
Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.
- 5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS**
Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.
- 6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES**
Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.
- 7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**
Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build these bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.
- 8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION**
Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.
- 9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING**
Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.
- 10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED**
Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

Meet Our Expert
Anna Boteman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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.

North Macedonia – July 2025 : Year 10 & 11 Mountain Walking

Trip: The destination for our foreign Mountain Walking trip this year was North Macedonia on the Balkan peninsula flying into Skopje airport. The group were transported to the oldest mountain hut in the country, the Ljuboten Refuge. This was used as a base by the group of 25 staff and students to climb the spectacular Ljuboten Peak (2498m/8196 ft) which straddles the border between North Macedonia and Kosovo, affording fantastic panoramic views over both countries. A commendable effort by all of the group to get to the summit. The next day the group moved base to the beautiful mountain village of Popova, sitting below Macedonia's second highest peak, Titov Vrv in the Shar mountains. A preparation day was undertaken ahead of climbing Mount Korab, the highest mountain in Macedonia and Albania standing at a height of 2,764m/9100 ft. Based in the mountain village of Trnica, a



one hour drive into the mountains began our 6 hour summit of the countries tallest peak. A very demanding climb, the group showed great fortitude, determination and stamina. The mountains provided fantastic scenery with alpine flowers and even a sighting of a bear with its cub transversing the limestone slopes below the summit. The groups conduct throughout the week was extremely positive and impressed the local Macedonia guides. A huge well done to all the students and a particular thank you to Mr Hollingsworth for accompanying the group and a special mention to Mr Jones, Dr Arnold and Mr Millham for giving up their time in the school holidays to transport the group to Heathrow airport. A great trip, well done.
G.Mason

Calling all students! OPEN AUDITIONS for the school production of A Christmas Carol. If you would like to audition for one of the many roles available or would like to be one of our technicians or stage hands, please join us in the Assembly Hall on Thursday 18th September at 3:40pm -4:30pm.

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

No tener pelos en la lengua

Literal translation in English: To not have hairs on your tongue.

When do we use it?: To describe someone straightforward that tells it how it is and doesn't hold back.

Example: María no tiene pelos en la lengua (Maria doesn't hold back)

Mariposa

(mah-ree-poh-sah)

Feminine Noun

English translation: Butterfly

Example: Hay una mariposa en el jardín.

(There is a butterfly in the garden.)

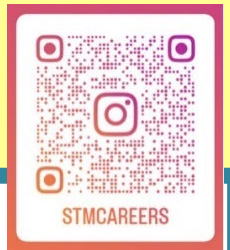


Aspire: online resources for all things careers/universities and apprenticeships, great for those not sure of the opportunities after GCSE's (POST 16) and A levels (POST 18). Click to find out more [The Aspire Guide - Flipbook - Page 1 \(paperturn-view.com\)](http://www.paperturn-view.com)

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](#).



Poetry Corner No.75

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—

For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;

And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise Him.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

["Pied Beauty" by Gerard Manley Hopkins - Classic Poetry with Jonathan Roumie](#)

[The Best Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems Everyone Should Read – Interesting Literature](#)

Yr. 11 Revision Sessions

I would like to begin by welcoming everyone back to after the summer break. I hope you are all looking forward to what will be an exciting and memorable year. This week I would like to inform you about some developments in year 11. I am currently in the process of building the Year 11 revision timetable. Revision sessions are run on voluntary basis by the wonderful staff at our school so please bear with us whilst we finalise sessions, rooming and staffing.

This half term is particularly important for year 11 as a lot of preparatory work will be done during lessons in the lead up to the November mock examinations. I would urge all students to have a revision timetable in place to ensure you are feeling confident ahead of these examinations. If any student does require some guidance on building a revision timetable then please come and speak to myself or Mr West (Year 11 PPM).

I would also stress the importance of punctuality to lesson, particularly after break and lunch, a few minutes here and a few minutes there might not seem like a great deal but the impact of students arriving late to lessons that have already started is quite disruptive to the young people who are already in the room and engaging in work. I would expect Year 11 to be role models to the rest of the school in this regard.

Finally, this year is a very enjoyable one for myriad reasons but I also appreciate it can be a very stressful time for some. If you or your child are uncertain about anything, worried about examinations then please do contact myself or Mr West; we are here to support you through this year and working together in this manner will ultimately only serve to provide your child with the best chances of achieving their potential. Have a lovely weekend. Mr Dooley and Mr West

Sports News

Year 8 Vs Eastwood (Friendly): Our first game of the season was a friendly against Eastwood, which finished 3-1 to them. Even though we lost there were a lot of positives to take away from it. Shoutout to Mylo as he scored his first goal for the school team! We will build on this performance as we get ready for our next game, a friendly against the Year 9a.

Fixtures

DATE	FIXTURE
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
9/22/2025	Under 13 House Table Tennis (HOME) 4pm
9/23/2025	Year 8 Football v Chase (AWAY) 4pm Under 16 Rugby Festival @ Brentwood 11:30am start - Leave 10:30am, return 4pm
9/24/2025	Year 7 A & B Football v Eastwood (HOME) 4pm kick off
9/25/2025	Year 10 B Football v Chase (AWAY) 4pm kick off - return 5:30pm
9/26/2025	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

Extracurricular Timetable – Autumn v1

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Before School	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel) Library 8-8.40am Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel) Library 8-8.40am Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel) Library 8-8.40am Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel) Library 8-8.40am Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel) Library 8-8.40am Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)
Breaktime	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel) Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel) Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel) Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel) Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel) Library 11.10-11.25am
Lunchtime	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel) Library 1.30-2.25pm Chess Club 1.30-2.25pm (RE3) Anime and Manga Club 2-2.25pm (Library) Aviation Club 2-2.25pm (MFL3) Orchestra 1.50pm (Music 1) Chaplaincy Games Club Years 7-11 1.35-2.25pm (RE4) Warhammer Club 1.40-2.20pm (Lab 1) KS3 Maths Support Club Years 7-8 1:45 – 2:15pm (Tech 4)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel) Library 1.30-2.25pm History Club 1.30—2pm (RE3) Liturgy Band 1.50pm (Music 1) Latin Club 1-2.25pm Years 7-9: invite only (RE1) Culture Club (Literature, Arts, Culture and Society) Years 10-13 1.30-2pm (E3)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel) Library 1.30-2.25pm Choir 1.50pm (Music 1) The Caritas Team 1.30-2pm (E4) Dungeons and Dragons 1.30-2.25pm (Lab 2) Computer Science Club Years 9-11 1.30–2.30pm (CR5) Minecraft Club Years 7-8 (CR4)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel) Library 1.30-2.25pm Pokémon Club 1.30-2.25pm (Lab 2) Classics Club 2-2.25pm Years 7-9: invite only (RE4) Magic The Gathering Club 2-2.25pm (Library) Chess Club 1.30-2.25pm (RE3) Guardians of the Garden 2-2.25pm Drama Club 2-2.25pm (H3) Accounting Club Years 11-13 1.30-2pm (BS2)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel) Library 1.30-2.25pm Folk Band Friday 1.50pm (Music 1) Film Club Years 7-10 1.40-2.20pm (BS1) Star Wars Club 2-2.25pm (Library) Bible Study 1.35-2.25pm (RE4) Labrats Years 7-8 1.40-2.25pm (Week 1 Lab 1/ Week 2 Lab 5)
After School	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel) Library 3.30-4pm	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel) Computer Science Club Years 9-11 3.30-4.30pm (CR5)	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel) Library 3.30-4pm Silver Duke of Edinburgh 3.30-4.45pm (Lab 10) Morley's music lessons	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel) Library 3.30-4pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Holy Hour) 3.50-4.40pm (Chapel) Rock Band 3.30-3.30pm (Music 1) Morley's music lessons	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel) Library 3.30-4pm

Note: Clubs with no mention of year groups are open to all year groups