MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER

Good afternoon to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 9th October:

1. **School Improvement plan update**: please find the November School Improvement Plan link to the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/2026-27-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improvement-Plan-November-2026-update-002.pdf .

CLs to invite SLT to a Faculty strategic meeting to support updating Faculty plans in November.

2. **Staffing:** Interviews for the permanent part-time Pupil Support Leader took place on Friday 6th November – the successful candidate was Gemma Banks – congratulations to Gemma who is now a full-time Pupil Support Leader at St Thomas of Aquin's. Interviews for the Biology Teacher permanent post took place on Thursday 4th November, the shortleet will take place on November 10th with 3 candidates being invited back for interview

3. **S1-S3 Tracking**: S1 to S3 Tracking reports will be sent to parents this week.

4. **S2 Parents Evening:** The S2 Parents Evening will take place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th November.

5. **Parent Council meeting**: We would like to invite all parents and carers to the next parent council gathering on 18th November 2026 from 6.30 to 8.30pm in the school. This will be an informal get together where we will have a chance to chat and discuss how we can work with the school to develop family learning opportunities. There will be pizza and soft drinks (no alcohol) so please do email us to let us know if you can join us. We look forward to seeing you then. Warm wishes, Fiona, Jo, John and Alasdair (Office bearers for parent council)

6. **S2 Parents and Pupils Information Evening – Thursday 26th November:** Curriculum and coursing: Madame Jean-Pierre and I will be holding an S2 parents and pupils Curriculum and Coursing event on Thursday 26th November from 5.00 – 6.00pm in the main hall. All S2 parents invited.

7. **Save the date – Thursday 17th December – St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas Concert at Central Halls: 7-9pm**

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 2 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the HT briefing for Monday 2nd November

1. **School Improvement plan update**: please find the November School Improvement Plan update.

2. **Staffing:** Interviews for the permanent part-time Pupil Support Leader will take place on Friday 6th November. The permanent full-time Biology post closed on Tuesday 27th October and we received 20 applications. Interviews will take place on Thursday 4th November.

3. **S5 Retreats**: Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Lucanu, and Mr Beschi, and our Lay Chaplains with the organisation of our S5 retreats in November.

Wednesday 4 November	**S5** Surnames A-K
Thursday 5 November	**S5** Surnames L-Z
Friday 6 November (Ends 1.10pm)	**S2** Surnames A-K
Wednesday 2 December	**S6** Surnames A-K
Thursday 3 December	**S6** Surnames L-Z
Friday 4 December (Ends 1.10pm)	**S2** Surnames L-Z

4. **S1-S3 Tracking**: S1 to S3 Tracking started on Tuesday 20th October and will be completed by Friday 30th November. Once quality assurance has taken place we hope to send the Tracking reports to parents by **Monday 9th November.**

5. **S1 Study Support Club** will be starting on **Thursday lunchtimes in room 3.33 from Thursday 29th October.** Pupils can just turn up on the day. Please encourage your child to attend. The club will be supported by Miss Perez (Modern Languages) and Miss O'Neill (CDT).

6. **P7 MS Teams meeting**: St Thomas of Aquin's will support P7 parents with an online MS Teams meeting on Wednesday 4th November 5-6pm: please find the attached letter outlining the event.

7. **S2 Parents Evening:** The S2 Parents Evening will take place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th November. I look forward to meeting S2 parents on both evenings.

8. **S2 Parents and pupils Information Evening:** Curriculum and coursing: Madame Jean-Pierre and I will be holding an S2 parents and pupils Curriculum and Coursing event on 27th November from 5.00 – 6.00pm in the main hall. All S2 Parents invited.

8. **Save the date – Thursday 17th December – St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas Concert at Central Halls: 7-9pm**

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 19th October.

St Thomas of Aquin's is excited to be holding our Culture Day on Thursday 22nd October. This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to celebrate and learn about the diverse cultures within our school community. As part of the celebrations, we would love to include a range of dishes and snacks from different cultures for pupils to sample throughout the day. If pupils/families would be willing to donate any traditional food for the event or to undertake a workshop/ hold a stall, we would be very grateful.

It will also be a non-school uniform day, and we heavily encourage cultural dress: Culture Day Form – Fill in form

S6 Equalities Captains

1. **S4 Parents Evening:** Our first Parents Evening of the year take place on Monday 26th October from 5-7pm. I believe the 2 main areas of interest for parents are to know what Level my child is at now and how can my child improve to get to the next level?

2. **School uniform**: Thank you to families for continuing to support their children wearing full school uniform. Please continue to help St Thomas of Aquin's with pupils wearing: A white shirt and school tie, black trousers of skirts, black shoes, and a plain black V-neck jumper or a school hoodie.

3. **Congratulations to Cerys Reed-Maddy and Georgia Cordiner** who are the St Thomas' Lessons from Auschwitz Ambassadors for this year.

The pupils will be travelling to Poland for a one-day visit at the beginning of November. They will miss some class time on the following days: **Monday 2nd November** - pupils out in afternoon for orientation seminar: **Tuesday 3rd November** - pupils out all day - trip to Poland. **Monday 9th November** - pupils out of class during per 7 for follow-up seminar. I am looking forward to Cerys and Georgia leading assemblies on their experience.

4. **S5 Retreats**: Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Lucanu, and Mr Beschi, and our Lay Chaplains with the organisation of our S5 retreats in November.

Wednesday 4 November	**S5** Surnames A-K
Thursday 5 November	**S5** Surnames L-Z
Friday 6 November (Ends 1.10pm)	**S2** Surnames A-K
Wednesday 2 December	**S6** Surnames A-K
Thursday 3 December	**S6** Surnames L-Z
Friday 4 December (Ends 1.10pm)	**S2** Surnames L-Z

5. **S1-S3 Tracking**: will start on Tuesday 20th October.

6. **Sports Captains:** Our sports captains (Anna Tribout, Cameron Reid, and Luke McCallum) held their first sporting event during the last week of term, organising a S3/4 Football tournament. This year's winners were the reigning champions from last year, suitably calling themselves 'The Champions'.



Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 5 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

This is the last HT briefing before the October holidays which start from Monday 12th October and all pupils return to school in full school uniform on Tuesday 20th October.

I thought I would give a quick summary of all the positives that have happened in the first 8 weeks of term:

- A great start to the term for our new S1 year group – well done to all 158 pupils
- A September S1 parents settling in event - I think this will become an annual event
- A 3rd fulltime Permanent Depute Head Teacher starting – Ms Taylor (a former St Thomas of Aquin's pupil) who is collating the achievement of all pupils via Key Adult
- An average pupil attendance rate of 93.5%
- Permanent Teachers in Geography, Business, Art, and Support for Learning secured and starting after the October break
- A positive first Parent Council meeting and the development of competitive sports back into St Thomas of Aquin's
- A S4-S6 information evening to support future pathways
- The school's wellbeing committee chaired by our Business Manager planning a great MacMillan coffee morning
- A great set of collective S4-S6 Qualifications Scotland exam results – some of our best exam results in the last 15 years.
- The new S6 Leadership Team and S5 Prefect Team supporting events within the school

7. **Mr Duncan Kennedy** (Science Faculty/Physics): Goodbye but not farewell to Mr Kennedy who finishes on Wednesday 7th of October.

3. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mrs McGhee who is the successful candidate for the permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher post.

4. **S4-S6 Tracking starts**: S4-S6 Tracking reports will be shared with parents on Monday 5th October. S1-S3 BGE tracking will start on Tuesday 20th October.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 28th September

Thank you to Ms Mariani and Mrs Stark and all the guest speakers at our S4-S6 senior information evening on Wednesday 23rd September. I thought it was a very good evening to support pupils and parents with the many pathways available post-school.

Please find attached St Thomas of Aquin's Learning, Teaching, and Assessment bulletin developed by Mrs Rutherford (Social Subjects Faculty).

8. **Mr D Kennedy** (Science Faculty/Physics) will be retiring on Wednesday 7th October. I would like to thank Mr Kennedy for all his work and support of St Thomas of Aquin's pupils in The Science Faculty and specifically in Physics during his 25 years at St Thomas of Aquin's. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's thank you Mr Kennedy for all your work.

9. **P6-P7 visitors:** St Thomas of Aquin's enjoyed another P6 and P7 parents visiting the school on Friday 25th September; our last Friday morning will take place on the 2nd October.

4. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Ms Claire Duguid who is the successful candidate for the Art Teacher post and to Mrs Hannah Milne who is the successful candidate for the Geography and Environmental Science Teacher post. Interviews for a permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher will take place on Monday 28th September.

5. **S4-S6 Tracking starts**: S4-S6 tracking reports will be shared with parents and pupils prior to the start of the October holiday.

5. **September parent event**: On Monday 28th September, there will be an S1 settling in event in which S1 parents can meet Pupil Support Leaders and Deputes Heads

6. **English Faculty update**: All National 5 and Higher English S4-S6 pupils must complete the first draft of their folio in supervised conditions. To support this, supervised writing of the folio will take place all week in English week beginning the 9th November. Pupils can have a plan and notes to support them during this process. The class teacher will check these to ensure they meet the expectations of the assessment conditions. The folio accounts for 30% of the final grade and as usual we strongly advise that pupils use this opportunity to show the best that they can do.

7. **St Thomas of Aquin's Culture Day**: has been moved to after the October break – Thursday 22nd October

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher

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MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 21st September.

I am very pleased to report that St Thomas of Aquin's boys senior football team is now competing in the Edinburgh school league, and we are hoping to have an S1 boys football team starting up soon. The S5 Prefects have been a great addition to the leadership of the school this session and they have decided to focus on the sick kids' charity for their fundraising this year:



1. **Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon and the Chaplaincy team** for supporting the Caritas Commissioning Service last week at St Mary's RC Cathedral. Please find the S6 picture with Archbishop Leo Cushley and our lay chaplains Emma Collins and Miriam Reynolds. This marks the start of the S6 Caritas Team journey towards completing 40 hours of voluntary 'faith witness' in the school and parish communities.

2. **P6-P7 visitors:** St Thomas of Aquin's experienced its first of three P6 & P7 parents' events on Friday 18th September with over 50 parents visiting the school and being toured around the school by our S6 Leadership team. St Thomas of Aquin's is looking forward to the next 2 Fridays of P6 and P7 parents visiting the school.

3. **Staffing:** Interviews for a permanent part-time Art Teacher will take place on Tuesday 22nd September; Interviews for a permanent full-time Geography will take place on Thursday 24th September; and Interviews for a permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher will take place on Monday 28th September.

4. **S4-S6 Tracking starts**: S4-S6 Tracking started on Tuesday 15th September and finishes on the Friday 25th September – Learner conversations for all S4-S6 pupils continues through to the end of the tracking window.

5. **September parent events at St Thomas of Aquin's**: There are 2 events planned for late September for parents:

On Wednesday 23rd September there will be an S4-S6 Senior information event led by Ms Mariani which will support parents with senior coursing and applications to college and University.

We will be holding our Senior information evening in school on **Wednesday 23 September from 5pm to 6.30pm**. We will have guest speakers from Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce, UCAS, Universities and more. If you are planning to attend, could you please complete the form below to allow us to plan the evening accordingly: Senior information evening attendance – Fill in form

On Monday 28th September, there will be an S1 settling in event in which S1 parents can meet Pupil Support Leaders and Deputes Heads

6. **CEC citywide Mobile phone ban**: St Thomas of Aquin's will receive phone pouches at the end of October. I will conduct a series of staff planning exercises and pupil assemblies to introduce the use of pouches for all S1-S6 pupils. I will keep staff, pupils, and parents informed of when the pouches will become part of our daily routines.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Tuesday 15th September – S1 pupils will be allowed out at break and lunchtime as of Tuesday 15th September

1. **Staffing:** Interviews for Geography, Art, Support for Learning, and Biology posts will take place from week beginning Monday 21st September.

2. **S4-S6 Tracking starts**: S4-S6 Tracking starts Tuesday 15th September – Learner conversations for all S4-S6 pupils continues through to the end of the tracking window.

3. **September parent events at St Thomas of Aquin's**: There are 2 events planned for late September for parents:

On Wednesday 23rd September there will be a S4-S6 Senior information event which Ms Mariani is leading which will support parents with senior coursing and applications to college and University.
On Monday the 28th September, there will be a S1 settling in event in which S1 parents can meet Pupil Support Leaders and Deputes Heads.
Both events will start from 5pm in the main hall and finish at 6.30/7.00pm.

4. **Coursing and Qualification Scotland communication**: Ms Mariani has now completed S4-S6 recoursing. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2026-27. Senior pupils will complete all their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. All senior pupils will be presented for all their National Qualifications subjects, and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is required.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday7th September; I am looking forward to the 1st Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 8th September from 6.30pm

5. **Staffing:** Adverts for our Geography, Art, Support for Learning, and Biology posts are live on https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/search and close at midnight on Tuesday 8th September. Interviews will take place from week beginning Monday 21st September.

6. **September parent events at St Thomas of Aquin's**: There are 2 events planned for late September for parents:

On Wednesday 23rd September there will be a S4-S6 Senior information event which Ms Mariani is leading which will support parents with senior coursing and applications to college and University.
On Monday the 28th September, there will be a S1 settling in event in which S1 parents can meet Pupil Support Leaders and Depute Heads.
Both events will start from 5pm in the main hall and finish at 6.30/7.00pm.

7. **Learning and Teaching Assemblies and senior tracking**: Thank you to Ms Mariani and Ms Rutherford for their assembly presentations to all year groups last week on Learning Teaching and

Assessment. Please take time to read the attached bulletin which we will start to place on the school website. S4-S6 Learning conversations are taking place this month which will support the 1st Senior phase tracking reports starting on Tuesday 15th September and finishing on Friday 28th of September. S4-S6 Parents should receive these Tracking Reports prior to the October break.

8. **House Assemblies:** There will be House Assemblies week beginning Monday 7th September: **Monday 7th September - St Margarets**. **Tuesday 8th September - St Andrews. Wednesday 9th September - St Patricks.** A significant part of the assemblies will be sharing our extracurricular clubs programme for session 2026-27 which I have attached and will be shared on the school website after these assemblies.

9. **P6 and 7 associated primary school parents invite to experience St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School September and October 2026** Up to 80 P6 and 7 Associated Parents are invited to visit St Thomas of Aquin's on each of the following dates: **Friday 18th September, Friday 25th September and Friday 2nd October** from 11.30-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Each Friday morning will involve meeting the HT in the staffroom for an initial coffee/tea, a tour of the school by the S6 Leadership Team and then a Q&A session for 20 minutes in a classroom. Why Fridays and why during the school day? Parents will get a direct experience of our school community and be able to feel and see our school in action.

If you are aware of any P6 or P7 parent within our catchment area then please share this event with them: please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information: Name of parent, Name of pupil and Primary school, Date of visit:

10. **Coursing and Qualification Scotland communication**: Ms Mariani has now completed S4-S6 recoursing. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2026-27. Senior pupils will complete all their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. All senior pupils will be presented for all their National Qualifications subjects, and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is required.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 31 AUGUST

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's parents

Please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 31st August, the 1st Parent Council meeting of the session will take place on Tuesday 8th September from 6.30 onwards in room 3.33 (The Languages Faculty)

Ms Mariani will be holding Learning and Teaching assemblies for all year groups on Tuesday 1st September. At these assemblies I will congratulate our pupils, your children, on their continued support of the City of Edinburgh Council Bell to Bell mobile phone ban. I will remind all pupils that if mobile phones are seen then a discussion will be held which could result in mobile phones being handed over.

1. **Staffing:** I do not have any updates regarding our teaching posts adverts going live. As soon as they are I will update parents and families.

2. **Faculty attainment meetings:** From Monday 7th September, faculty attainment meetings will commence:

- **Monday 7th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **English and Literacy**
- **Monday 7th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Maths and Numeracy**
- **Tuesday 8th of September** Lesson 6: **Performing Arts**
- **Wednesday 9th of September** from 9.15 to 10.20: **Physical Education**
- **Thursday 10th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **Sciences**
- **Thursday 10th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Languages**

- **Friday 11th of September** Lesson 4 and 5: **Computing and Business Education**
- **Tuesday 15th of September**: Lesson 2: **Religious Education**
- **Tuesday 15th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **Art, Design, and Technologies**
- **Thursday 17th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Social Subjects**

3. **Parent Council and Parent support:** Mr Murray is looking for parents/carers who may be able to support with the increase of competitive sports at St Thomas of Aquin's. As our competitive sport programme continues to grow, additional adult support would be greatly appreciated to help with the running of teams. You do not need to be a qualified coach or have extensive experience, if you have an interest in a sport, and would be willing to help, we would love to hear from you. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the school for more information at: admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk . Thank you for your continued support of competitive sport and helping provide our pupils with these opportunities.

4. **House Assemblies:** There will be House Assemblies week beginning Monday 7th September: **Monday 7th September - St Margarets**. **Tuesday 8th September - St Andrews. Wednesday 9th September - St Patricks**

5. **P6 and 7 associated primary school parents invite to experience St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School September and October 2026 -** Up to 80 P6 and P7 associated parents are invited to visit St Thomas of Aquin's on each of the following dates: Friday 18th September, Friday 25th September and Friday 2nd October from 11.30-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Each Friday morning will involve meeting the HT in the staffroom for an initial coffee/tea, a tour of the school by the S6 Leadership Team and then a Q and A session for 20 minutes in a classroom. Why Fridays and why during the school day? Parents will get a direct experience of our school community and be able to feel and see our school in action.

If you are aware of any P6 or P7 parent within our catchment area then please share this event with them: please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information: Name of parent, Name of pupil and Primary school, Date of visit:

6. **The Teenage Brain:** Please find attached a practical support for parents on The Teenage Brain.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 24 AUGUST

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

As we move into the 3rd week of term the school has continued its calm and productive learning environment and the mobile phone ban continues to be very successful. I would like to thank parents and pupils of St Thomas of Aquin's for their ongoing support. Please consider attending the **1st Parent Council meeting of the term on Tuesday 8th September** in which I would imagine there will be a discussion on how the mobile phone ban is going along with our very good senior phase attainment and achievement results.
Please consider following St Thomas of Aquin's on LinkedIn as https://www.linkedin.com/in/st-thomas-of-aquin's-rc-high-school-61ba913a2?utm_source=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=member_ios

11. **Staffing:** Adverts for a permanent full-time Geography Teacher; permanent part-time Art and Design Teacher, permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher and a fixed-term full-time Support for Learning Teacher will be in place as soon as possible.

12. **Parent Council and Parent support:** Mr Murray is looking for parents/carers who may be able to support with the increase of competitive sports at St Thomas of Aquin's. As our competitive sport programme continues to grow, additional adult support would be greatly appreciated to help with the running of teams. You do not need to be a qualified coach or have extensive experience, if you have an interest in a sport, and would be willing to help, we would love to hear from you. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the school for more information at: admin@st-

thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk . Thank you for your continued support of competitive sport and helping provide our pupils with these opportunities.

13. **P6 and 7 associated primary school parents invite to experience St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School September and October 2026** Up to 80 P6 and 7 Associated Parents are invited to visit St Thomas of Aquin's on each of the following dates: Friday 18th September, Friday 25th September and Friday 2nd October from 11.30-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Each Friday morning will involve meeting the HT in the staffroom for an initial coffee/tea, a tour of the school by the S6 Leadership Team and then a Qand A session for 20 minutes in a classroom. Why Fridays and why during the school day? Parents will get a direct experience of our school community and be able to feel and see our school in action.

If you are aware of any P6 or P7 parent within our catchment area then please share this event with them: please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information: Name of parent, Name of pupil and Primary school, Date of visit:

14. **S5 Prefects and S6 Leadership Team:** Please find attached the names of the 50 S5 Prefects supporting break and lunchtimes from this week onwards. The next S5 Perfects meeting will take place on Tuesday 25th August during Key Adult Classes. S5 Prefects are to register in KA prior to attending the staffroom.

S5 Perfects will be meeting with next on Tuesday 25th August during Key Adult Time and the S6 Leadership Team will be meeting on Thursday 27th August

15. **New House structure**: Whatever year group a pupil is in, the main colleague that pupils will go to for initial information (for example attendance, coursing, concerns, attainment, and achievement) will be their **House Pupil Support Leader and House Senior Leadership Team Leader**. If pupils or parents wish to meet with staff, it will be the Pupil Support Leader who they meet with first and then where appropriate the Senior Leader of their child's House.

Madame Jean-Pierre **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Patricks** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Ms Kelly**	**Ms Mariani** **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Andrews** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Mrs Stark & Mrs Banks**	**Ms Taylor** **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Margarets** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Mrs Banks & Mr Rafferty**

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 17 AUGUST

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 17th August

I would like to thank you and congratulate our pupils all for a very calm and focussed start to the new term. I have been particularly impressed with how St Thomas of Aquin's pupils have adjusted to the Citywide mobile phone ban. The school will continue to focus on implementing the Elected Members Citywide Ban throughout the coming weeks, and I look forward to the exemption protocols being shared by CEC senior managers with pupils, parents, and staff.

16. **Staffing:** Adverts for a permanent full-time Geography Teacher; permanent part-time Art and Design Teacher, permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher and a fixed-term full-time Support for Learning Teacher will be in place as soon as possible.

17. **Attainment**: Congratulations to all our senior pupils and St Thomas' staff who led pupil learning and teaching experience throughout session 2025-26. Please find the link to the initial School and Faculty analysis of the 2025-26 Qualification Scotland results: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-SQA-2026-results.pdf . Ms Taylor has shared the 2026 Data Suite analysis with all staff (this is a comprehensive analysis spreadsheet that supports a granular analysis of all senior attainment) and I will hold attainment meetings with Curricular Leaders starting Week beginning Monday 7th of September to discuss Broad General Education S3 Curriculum for Excellence Levels and Senior Phase Qualifications Scotland attainment analysis.

- **Monday 7th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **English and Literacy**

- **Monday 7th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Maths and Numeracy**
- **Tuesday 8th of September** Lesson 6: **Performing Arts**
- **Wednesday 9th of September** from 9.15 to 10.20: **Physical Education**
- **Thursday 10th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **Science**
- **Thursday 10th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Languages**
- **Friday 11th of September** Lesson 4 and 5: **Computing and Business Education**
- **Tuesday 15th of September**: Lesson 2: **Religious Education**
- **Tuesday 15th of September** Lessons 3 and 4: **Art, Design, and Technologies**
- **Thursday 17th of September** Lessons 6 and 7: **Social Subjects**

18. **New House structure**: Whatever year group a pupil is in, the main colleague that pupils will go to for initial information (for example attendance, coursing, concerns, attainment, and achievement) will be their **House Pupil Support Leader and House Senior Leadership Team Leader**. If pupils or parents wish to meet with staff, it will be the Pupil Support Leader who they meet with first and then where appropriate the Senior Leader of their child's House.

Madame Jean-Pierre **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Patricks** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Ms Kelly**	**Ms Mariani** **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Andrews** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Mrs Stark & Mrs Banks**	**Ms Taylor** **Depute Head Teacher** **Strategic Head of St Margarets** **Pupil Support Leader:** **Mrs Banks & Mr Rafferty**

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 22 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

Please find the last HT briefing for session 2025-26; on behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I do wish you and your family a relaxing summer holiday. All pupils return, in full school uniform, on Wednesday 12th August.

I also wish all senior pupils the best of luck when they receive their Qualification Scotland exam results in early August.

Thank you to Ms Wilson, Mr Cunningham, Mrs Fraser, Mrs Winders, Mrs Kirk, and Ms Jacquet for planning and supporting our talented pupils with a beautiful and engaging Art exhibition on Wednesday 17th June. I thought the event was outstanding, and if you managed to come along to the school you would have experienced the main hall in full artistic splendour.

1. **St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School 2026-27 S6 Leadership Team**

After an open, transparent, and competitive application, vote, and interview experience I can reveal that the successful S6 pupils for Head Girl, Head Boy, Depute Head Boy, and Depute Head Girl are:

- **Head girl:** Lera Bineesh
- **Head boy:** Damia Perello-Vives
- **Depute Head boy**: Henry Molina
- **Depute Head girl:** Sarah Asim

I would like to thank the S6 pupils who applied for the above posts and unsuccessful pupils can apply for House, Equalities, Music and Art, and Sports Captains. All S6 pupils have been kept informed via email throughout the last 2 weeks and applications can still be handed in this morning.

2. **St Andrew's, Margaret's, and St Patrick's House Assemblies**: With the new 3 strategic Depute Head and Pupil Support Leader structure in place. There will be standards and expectations Assemblies this week. At these Assemblies we will emphasise:

- Attending and being on time for school: Pupils to arrive by 8.38 to start Key Adult Classes for 8.40
- To wear full school uniform every day: White shirt and St Thomas of Aquin's tie; black trousers (not Jeans of leggings) or skirts; black shoes and a black non-logo jumper or a St Thomas of Aquin's branded top.
- To be ready and take an active part in all lessons

3. **Staffing:** Interviews for Fixed-term posts in Maths and Biology have been taken place last week and this week. The advert for a Fixed-term CL of Computing and Business (part-time) closed on Friday 19th June and I hope to interview this week.

4. **3 Day P7/S1 visit**: St Thomas of Aquin's experienced a very positive 3 day visit and I would like to thank Madame Jean-Pierre and her team for their strategic planning. The school is looking forward to our new S1 pupils returning to St Thomas of Aquin's in August

5. **The end of term**: The final day of term will be on Friday 26th June. There will be assemblies for all pupils from 12 noon onwards - S4-6 pupils 12.00-12.30 and then S1-S3 12.30-1.00pm. Friday will be a non-uniform day in which pupils can wear appropriate clothing to school.

If pupils can bring in a voluntary donation of £1 so we can raise money for The Sisters of Mercy, I would be very grateful.

6. **Parent Council**: Please find the minutes of the Parent Council AGM in May. I would like to thank all members of the parent council for their support and work and I look forward to working with our new Chair Dr Fiona McQueen.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher

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MONDAY 15 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 15th June

Congratulations to all pupils and staff for a lovely senior phase awards ceremony on Tuesday 9th June. Thanks to all staff who supported the evening, strategically led by Ms Taylor. The following evening a successful S6 Prom in central Edinburgh was enjoyed by our S6 Leavers - I wish them all the best in their futures.

19. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be saying goodbye to Dr. Jane Laverick at the end of term: and what a contribution Dr Laverick has made in her time at the school. Her joy for learning, her intellectual capacity, and deeply felt support for our pupils is going to be greatly missed.

Congratulations to Ms McGowan who is the successful permanent Pupil Support Leader at Currie Community High School. Although I am sad to say goodbye to Ms McGowan, on behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I am very happy that her positive energy, leadership in Rights Respecting School, and care for the whole child has secured her the promotion she deserves.
We will be saying goodbye to Mr Simpson for one year as he and his family will be moving to Washington DC for a session 2026-27. We wish Mr Simpson all the best and hope for a return as soon as possible.
Please find the SLT remits for 2026-27

20. **School and Faculty improvement planning:** Please find attached a draft 2026-27 School Improvement Plan and an updated and final 2025-26 School Improvement plan.

21. **3 Day P7/S1 visit**: The school is looking forward to meeting the new S1 pupils on Tuesday 16th to Thursday 18th June; another cohort of 160 pupils becoming part of the St Thomas of Aquin's community.

22. **The end of term**: The final day of term will be on Friday 26th June. There will be assemblies for all pupils from 12 noon onwards S4-6 pupils 12.00-12.30 and then S1-S3 12.30-1.00pm. Friday will be a non-uniform day in which pupils can wear appropriate clothing to school. I can support pupils who are not appropriately dressed with school uniform.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 8 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 8th June

Thank you for your continued support with school uniform, it is greatly appreciated. Please find a flyer for the Art Exhibition on the 17th June

23. **Staffing:** Adverts for a permanent part-time Business Teacher, a fixed-term part-time Biology Teacher, a fixed-term part-time Maths Teacher have closed, and interviews will take place this week and next week..

Please find the SLT remits for 2026-27 - I hope to take some time in the June 15th CAT session to go over the remits

24. **S6 and S5 Leadership positions:** Please find the S6 2026-27 Leadership process which was shared with our new S6 pupils last Wednesday.

25. **S3 European fieldtrip 2027**: The Modern Language Faculty are planning a S3 Paris field trip for April 2027.

26. **School and Faculty improvement planning:** The Senior Leadership Team have completed a draft School Improvement Plan which will be shared with the school community beginning Monday 8th June. I will also share an updated and final 2025-26 School Improvement plan.

27. **Senior Awards**: Tuesday 9th June S4-S6 2025-26 senior awards evening, starting at 6.00pm and finishing approximately at 8.00pm. The S1-S3 Broad General Education awards were held yesterday in the main hall and were very successful. Thank you to Ms Taylor for her strategic leadership in this area.

28. **S6 Prom:** The S6 Prom will take place on Wednesday 10th June in central Edinburgh.

29. **3 Day P7/S1 visit**: The school is looking forward to meeting the new S1 pupils on Tuesday 16th to Thursday 18th June; another cohort of 160 pupils becoming part of the St Thomas of Aquin's community.

30. **CEC**: The Children, Education and Communities service in the Council has developed a survey for parents and carers to help consider how they shape and improve their service. Please see link to survey - Parent and Carer Survey 2026 – Fill in form. We would be delighted if you would take the time to fill out this survey and submit it by 28 June 2026. Survey information will shortly be available on our website.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 1 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 1st June – we welcome back our new S5 and S6 senior pupils

Thank you to all parents for supporting pupils wearing full school uniform to school. I am asking all pupils to be wearing a white shirt and a school tie underneath a school jumper/hoodie/blazer (which can be taken off when the weather is hotter). Please can all pupils be in appropriate school trousers or skirts – Black Jeans are not part of St Thomas of Aquin's uniform.

School uniform:

- White shirt
- School Tie
- Black school trousers or skirts
- Black school jumper or Hoodie (non-branded unless its St Thomas of Aquin's)
- Black shoes

31. **Staffing:** Adverts for a permanent part-time Business Teacher and a fixed-term part-time Biology Teacher are live on Myjobscotland and will close on Wednesday 3rd June. A fixed-term part-time Maths Teacher advert will close on the 4th June.

32. **Parent Council**: I would like to thank the work of The Parent Council for session 2025-26 and welcome Dr Fiona McQueen as our new Chair for session 2026-27. I look forward to working with her and the Parent Council in session 2026-27 to continue to improve St Thomas of Aquin's.

33. **S3 European fieldtrip 2027**: The Modern Language Faculty have a draft S3 Paris field trip ready to run for April 2027. I have asked whether other faculties are interested in planning a European field trip in April 2027 or April 2028. I will keep new S3 parents updated.

34. **School and Faculty improvement planning:** The Senior Leadership Team have completed a draft School Improvement Plan which will be shared with the school community week beginning Monday 8th June. I will also share an updated and final 2025-26 School Improvement plan.

35. **S5 Work Experience and London Trip :** S5 pupils will be out of school from June 1st - June 4th . The London Music Trip will take place the same week. Thank you to Ms Patrick and Mr Kennedy for planning the Music trip.

36. **Senior Awards**: Tuesday 9th June S4-S6 2025-26 senior awards evening, starting at 6.00pm and finishing approximately at 8.00pm.

37. **S6 Prom:** The S6 Prom will take place on Wednesday 10th June in central Edinburgh.

38. **3 Day P7/S1 visit**: The school is looking forward to meeting the new S1 pupils on Tuesday 16th to Thursday 18th June; another cohort of 160 pupils becoming part of the St Thomas of Aquin's community.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 25 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 25th May. This is the last week of the May exam season, and we will be welcoming back our new S5 and S6 pupils to the school next week.

39. **Staffing:** I am pleased to inform you that Miss Christian Taylor is the successful candidate for the permanent Depute Headteacher position at St Thomas of Aquin's. The new Depute Head teacher remit will start in August on our return form summer holidays. I will update the school community with regards to new senior leadership team remits update and the new House structure we are planning to implement for August.

40. **School and Faculty improvement planning and Parent survey analysis:** I met with Ani Lawrence (The school's QIEO) last week to go over the draft Standards and Quality Report for the school and the draft School Improvement plan. Ani is very positive about our self-evaluation processes that have been developed from the February SSE. The Senior Leadership Team will have a completed Standards and Quality Report by early June which I will share with the school community

41. **Parent Council meeting:** The Parent Council AGM will take place on Wednesday 27th May from 6.30 to 8.30.

42. **S2 and S3 Careers Fayre**: There will be a careers fayre for S2 and S3 pupils on 27th May in the main hall. Thank you to Liam for leading on this and I hope the pupils get a lot out of the experience.

43. **S5 Work experience and London Trip:** S5 pupils will be out of school from June 1st - June 4th. The London Music Trip will take place the same week.

44. **Senior Awards**: Tuesday 9th June S4-S6 2025-26 senior awards evening, starting at 6.00pm and finishing approximately at 8.00pm.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 11 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 11th May.

I have offered to meet parents after school (4.30-5.30) on Wednesday 20th May to support an SSE analysis and next step discussion. Please fill in the MS Form is you are interested in attending a meeting in school from 4.30pm: St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School self-supported evaluation parent meeting – Fill in form.

If we have more than 30 parents interested then I believe this would be a useful meeting to hold, at present we have 6 parents who wish to attend. I will send out the HT briefing to parents on Friday 15th to confirm next steps. If we have a low uptake, another way to support discussion is to have interested parents attend the Parent Council AGM meeting on 27th May (6.30 – 8.30) where I can utilise my HT time to discuss the SSE document.

45. **Staffing:** On Thursday 7th May, 3 candidates were interviewed for the Depute Head Teacher post. I can confirm that 1 candidate, Christian Taylor, has been successful in moving on to the shortleet interview process on Wednesday 20th May.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning and Parent survey analysis:** Pupil and parent surveys can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/ . Faculties are sending in their updated 2025-26 Faculty plans to me along with draft Faculty plans for session 2026-27

3. **Change of timetable**: Change of timetable will start on Tuesday 19th May (after the Victoria Day Monday holiday)

4. **Senior Awards – save the date**: Tuesday 9th June S4-S6 2025-26 senior awards evening

5. **S1 Parents Evenings**: Questions for parents: What CfE Level is my child achieving at? What is the evidence for this judgement? What is my Child's next steps?

1st Evening: Tuesday 12th May	**2nd Evening: Wednesday 13th May**

Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Computing Science	Religious Education
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning
Wellbeing Hub	

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 4 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 4th May. I have sent out the SSE letter and Report to the school community on Friday 1st May, and I have attached it in this email.

I believe this SSE report identifies the detailed strengths of the school and the improvement areas that we can collegiately move forward to deliver positive and sustainable success for our pupils, your children. I would like to hold a parent meeting on Wednesday 20th May from 4.30-5.30pm to hear the voices of parents and hold a Q&A session and identify next steps for School and Faculty improvement in session 2026-27 and beyond.

Please fill in the MS Form if you are interested in attending a meeting in school from 4.30pm: St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School self-supported evaluation parent meeting – Fill in form. If we have a number of more than 30 then I believe this would be a useful meeting to hold.

1. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's said goodbye to Jamie Brown (English Teacher) on Friday 1st May. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I wish Jamie all the very best in his new position with St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community

3 candidates will be interviewed for the Depute Headteacher post on 7th May.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning and Parent survey analysis:** Please find the St Thomas of Aquin's 2026 parent and pupil survey analysis.

3. **S1 Parents Evenings**: Our S1 parents evenings take place on week beginning Monday 11th May. I view these meetings as essential communication with parents who have yet to meet with many of us. Please plan accordingly with evidence of CfE levels and next steps in terms of individual pupil improvement.

1st Evening	**2nd Evening**
Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Computing Science	Religious Education
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning
Wellbeing Hub	

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 27 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 27th April. The draft City of Edinburgh SSE document has been shared with SLT colleagues for proof reading, and I hope to be able to share the final version with parents and staff next week.
The senior exams started last week, and I wish all pupils the very best for April and May. The majority of S3 pupils are off to Paris today and I would like to thanks Mrs Landsburgh for her planning of the field trip.

I have been asked to attach the flyer regarding CEC Learning Estates – please take time to read and join/attend an event

1. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's said goodbye to Mr Case (Craft Design Technology) on Friday. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I wish Mr Case and his family all the very best. Good luck with the new position.

4 candidates will be interviewed for the Depute Headteacher post on 7th May. The process will include a tour of the school by Isabelle and Stefania, a pupil panel, and a HT interview consisting of 5 questions.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning and parent survey analysis:** Please also find the 2026 parent survey analysis which can be used in faculty planning updates and Standards and Quality reporting.

3. **Scripture Union:** We are looking for parent volunteers to help with the Scripture Union (SU) Group which meets every Wednesday lunchtime. If you would be interested, please contact Lesley Crawford: lesley.crawford@suscotland.org.uk .

4. **S1 Parents Evenings**: Our S1 parents evenings take place on week beginning Monday 11th May. I view these meetings as essential communication with Parents who have yet to meet with many of us. Please plan accordingly with evidence of CfE levels and next steps in terms of individual pupil improvement.

1st Evening	2nd Evening

Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Computing Science	Religious Education
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning
Wellbeing Hub	

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 20 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Welcome back to St Thomas of Aquin's and I hope you enjoyed a lovely Easter holiday with your family. I was very fortunate to enjoy a great holiday with my family.

The last day for S4-S6 pupils is Wednesday 22nd April. This is a normal working school day, and all senior pupils are to be in classes focussing on revision for exams until their leaving assemblies. A tannoy will support the planned assemblies.

On Monday 27th April, the majority of S3 pupils will be in Paris. The remaining pupils will be split into 2 non-practical classes and 3 practical classes. Ms Mariani will meet with S3 pupils remaining in school to go over their timetables.

1. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's say goodbye to Mr Brown (English), and Mr Case (Craft Design Technology) over the next week. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I wish them all the very best and I thank them for their support and work for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils. 5 candidates will be interviewed for the Depute Headteacher post on 7th May. The process will include a tour of the school, a pupil panel, and a HT interview consisting of 5 questions.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning**: Please find attached the draft 2026-27 school improvement planning themes. The 5th May in-service day will support school and faculty planning. A reminder that Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th May are school holidays for pupils. There are no exams on Monday 4th May, Drama National 5 and Higher exams take place on Tuesday 5th May.

3. **S1 Parents Evenings**: Our S1 parents evenings take place on week beginning Monday 11th May. I am looking forward to meeting with S1 parents on both evenings and my advice to parents is to ask Teaching staff the following questions:
    1. What Curriculum for Excellence Level is my child working at?
    2. What evidence do you have for this judgement?

3. What are my child's next steps for improvement?

1st Evening: 12th of May	2nd Evening: 13th of May

Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Computing Science	Religious Education
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning
Wellbeing Hub	

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 30 MARCH

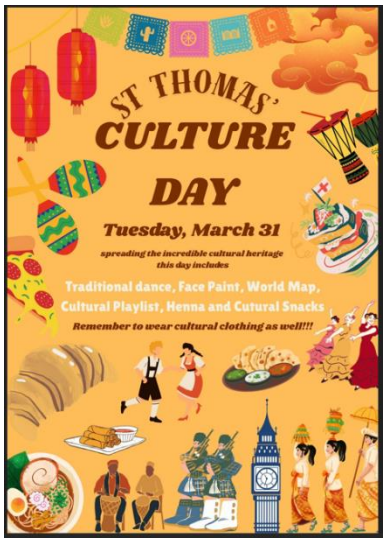
Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 20th March

The last day of term (Thursday 2nd April) is a full school day ending at our usual time of 3.30 and pupils will be wearing full school uniform. St Thomas of Aquin's staff and pupils return to school on Tuesday 21st of April.

Congratulations to all pupils, our visiting Music Teachers, and especially to Ms Patrick and Mr Wotherspoon for a wonderful Easter concert held on Thursday 26th March – congratulations to S3 Dario Moretti who won the St Thomas of Aquin's young musician of the year award. Dario will be performing at Portobello High school tonight as part of the Edinburgh young musician of the year competition…in bocca al lupo Dario

Thank you to Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Mariani, and Father Porter for leading the S6 Leavers Mass on Friday 27th March: please see pictures attached.

St Thomas of Aquin's Culture Day will take place on Tuesday 31st March – It's a non-uniform day and pupils can wear their cultural and heritage clothing



1. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's say goodbye to Miss Smith (Biology), Mr Brown (English), and Mr Case (Craft Design Technology) over the next month. Ms Smith leaves at the end of this term to go to a permanent Biology post in another City of Edinburgh School. Mr Case leaves at the end of April (Friday 24th April) to move to a school in Perthshire. Mr Brown takes up the St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community Additional Support for Learning position in May and will be working mainly with our associated primaries.

On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I wish them all the very best and I thank them for their support and work for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning**: The school has started the school improvement process with the parent and pupil surveys in full swing and the initial feedback from SSE in identifying improvement in the quality assurance of learning and teaching and a focus on differentiation. The school will continue to work on an anti-bullying process from last year's surveys along with working with the Parent Council in identifying parent volunteers for competitive sports and the implementation of a fieldtrip protocol. Please find attached the Draft 2026-27 school improvement planning themes.

To support a consistency in School and Faculty planning and self-evaluation I have developed and attached a 1.3 Leadership of Change document which I will present to all staff on the 27th April CAT session and the Leadership of Change Leadership Team meeting on the 23rd April.

3. **SQA Estimates**: S4-S6 pupil estimates will be entered into our Seemis Tracking and Monitoring system by faculties on Monday 30th March. Pupils will receive their estimates on Wednesday 1st April. Pupils will also be issued with individualised Qualifications Scotland timetables week beginning Monday 30th March.

On our return to St Thomas of Aquin's after the Easter holiday S4-S6 pupils will start their exam leave on Thursday 23rd April. S4-S6 Pupils with SQA exams on Wednesday 22nd April are entitled to have authorised absence on Tuesday 21st April , and S4-S6 pupils sitting an SQA exam on Thursday 23rd April are entitled to authorised absence on Wednesday 22nd April.

4. **S4 and S5 pupil iPads:** Mr Gillies has held S4 and S5 assemblies on Thursday 26th March to support pupils who are in scope for new iPads. A timetable has been created and shared with staff to support the handout of iPads to S4 and S5 pupils throughout the week beginning Monday 30th March.

5. **Parent Council:** The next Parent Council meeting takes place on Tuesday 31st March and will be held at St Thomas of Aquin's Modern Language Faculty from 6.30pm.

6. **Easter Revision:** Please find the Easter revision schedule attached.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher

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MONDAY 23 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for Monday 23rd March

I am looking forward to St Thomas of Aquin's Spring Concert on Thursday 26th March. Whether you have children performing of not, please come along and enjoy an evening of high-quality music. Tickets purchased on the door. (7-9pm in the main hall)

1. **Pupil and Parent surveys:** Thanks to the 140 parents who have completed the survey (open Monday 9th March and close on Tuesday 31st March).

Please find the Parents MS Forms survey: St Thomas of Aquin's parent survey March 2026 – Fill in form

The Pupils' survey is at the 220 return mark – and I am hoping for more returns throughout our last 2 weeks of term.

2. **School and Faculty improvement planning**: The school has started the school improvement process with the parent and pupil surveys in full swing and the initial feedback from SSE in identifying improvement in the quality assurance of learning and teaching and a focus on differentiation. The school will continue to work on an anti-bullying process from last year's surveys along with working with the Parent Council in identifying parent volunteers for competitive sports and the implementation of a fieldtrip protocol.

3. **SQA Estimates**: S4-S6 pupil estimates will be entered into our Seemis Tracking and Monitoring system by faculties on Monday 30th March. Pupils will receive their estimates on Wednesday 1st April.

4. **S4 and S5 pupil iPads:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be receiving new iPads for some S4 and S5 pupils prior to the Easter break. Mr Gillies has already emailed S4 and S5 pupils with an MS Forms survey to identify pupils iPads in scope. The new iPads are an upgrade from their current iPads and will alleviate some of the issues pupils are having regarding storage.

I will keep parents informed about next steps

5. **Parent Council:** The next Parent Council meeting takes place on Tuesday 31st March and will be held at St Thomas of Aquin's Modern Language faculty from 6.30pm.

I will update the Parent Council on the February SSE feedback and the process for interviewing the 3rd Depute Head Teacher (August 2026 start)

6. **2026 Paris Trip:** The S3 Paris trip leaves on the Monday 27th April and returns Friday 1st May. All S3 pupils remaining in school will be following their normal timetable and faculties will be condensing pupils into classes for this week.

7. **Staffing and SLT remits**: Interviews for a permanent full-time CDT Teacher and a permanent part-time Business Education Teacher took place last Wednesday and Thursday and Ms Wilson, Mr Gillies, and I have shared our preferred candidates with CEC.

An advert for a Depute Head Teacher post at St Thomas of Aquin's closes on Friday 20th March. Interviews will take place after the Easter holidays.

8. **If you interested in following St Thomas of Aquin's on LinkedIn** please search for St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 16 MARCH

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 16th March

I am looking forward to St Thomas of Aquin's Spring Concert on Thursday 26th March. Whether you have children performing of not, please come along and enjoy an evening of high-quality music. Tickets purchased on the door. (7-9pm in the main hall)

9. **Pupil and Parent surveys:** Thanks to the 100 parents who have completed the survey (Monday 9th March and close on Tuesday 31st March).

   Please find the Parents MS Forms survey: St Thomas of Aquin's parent survey March 2026 – Fill in form

10. **Staffing and SLT remits**: Interviews for a permanent full-time CDT Teacher and a permanent part-time Business Education Teacher will take place this Wednesday and Thursday.

An advert for a Depute Head Teacher post at St Thomas of Aquin's is live on Myjobscotland and will close on Friday 20th March. Interviews will take place after the Easter holidays. Please find attached the draft Senior Leadership Team remits for 2026-27.

11. **S3 Tracking**: S3 Tracking Reporting period is open and will close on 13th March. We will endeavour to have S3 Tracking reports to parents and pupils by week beginning Monday 23rd March.

12. **Uniform:** I will be asking the Senior Leadership Team and Pupil Support Leaders to support our high standards of uniform wearing at St Thomas of Aquin's throughout the month of March. Thank you to families for supporting with the wearing of

    - School Tie
    - White shirt
    - School Trousers or Skirts (No Jeans/Joggers)
    - Black shoes
    - St Thomas of Aquin's Hooded tops or V-neck jumpers or non-logo black V-neck jumper or hooded top.

I will be meeting with pupils wearing a limited selection of school uniform during Key Adult time during the month of March.

13. S4-S6 Final day and CEC study Leave guidance:

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils embarking on SQA exams will be **Wednesday 22nd April**. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan Assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4, S5 and S6 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 22nd April at 12 noon led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- S6 pupils will have an Assembly at 12 noon.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents' participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2025-26 S6 year group.

S4 and S5 pupils returning to St Thomas of Aquin's will return to school week beginning Monday 1st of June

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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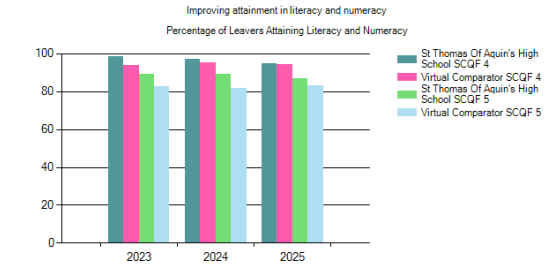
Trust
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MONDAY 9 MARCH

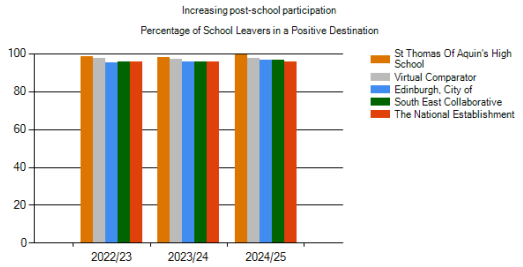
Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 9th March

14. **Insight update:** Congratulations to all St Thomas of Aquin's pupils, parents, and colleagues for the attainment and achievement outcomes articulated in the below February 2026 Insight update:

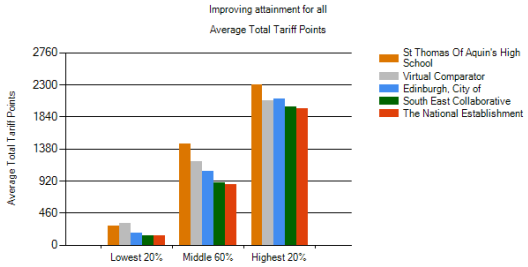
Dashboard: National Measures

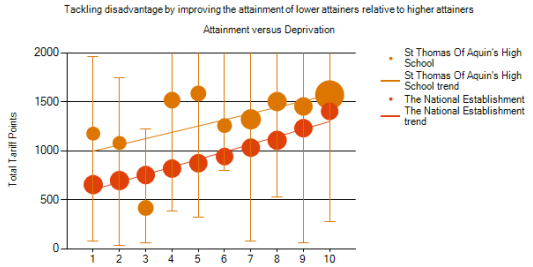


Add to personal dashboard



Add to personal dashboard





15. **Staffing and SLT remits**: Applications for a permanent full-time CDT Teacher and a permanent part-time Business Education Teacher have been submitted and I will be working with Curricular Leaders to identify dates and times for interviews.

An advert for a Depute Head Teacher post at St Thomas of Aquin's is live on Myjobscotland and will close on Friday 20th March. Interviews will take place after the Easter holidays.

16. **S3 Tracking**: S3 tracking reporting period is open and will close on Friday 13th March. We will endeavour to have S3 tracking reports to parents and pupils by week beginning Monday 23rd March.

17. **School Improvement Planning:** Please find the updated School Improvement Plan: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/

18. **Uniform:** I will be asking the Senior Leadership Team and Pupil Support Leaders to support our high standards of uniform wearing at St Thomas of Aquin's throughout the month of March. Thank you to families for supporting with the wearing of

    - School tie
    - White shirt
    - School trousers or skirts (no jeans/joggers)
    - Black shoes
    - St Thomas of Aquin's hooded tops or V-neck jumpers or non-logo black V-neck jumper or hooded top.

I will be meeting with pupils wearing a limited selection of school uniform during Key Adult time during the month of March.

19. **Pupil and Parent surveys:** The March pupil and parents' surveys will open on Monday 9th March and close on Tuesday 31st March.

All pupils will be sent the Pupil MS Forms via their email and time will be given during Key Adult and PSE to complete

Please find the Parents MS Forms survey: St Thomas of Aquin's parent survey March 2026 – Fill in form

Staff surveys will take place in May

20. **2026 coursing information:**

S5 pupils experienced a coursing assembly on Thursday 26th February to support their understanding of S6 coursing options: All S5 pupils will be coursed for at least 4 subjects in S6 unless they wish to study 3 Advanced Highers. Ms Mariani has sent out an email to all S5 pupils and parents can complete the MS Forms by Friday 13th of March: Course Choice S5 into S6 2026-2027 – Fill in form

Please find the coursing information on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

21. S4-S6 Final day and CEC study Leave guidance:

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils embarking on SQA exams will be **Wednesday 22nd April**. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4, S5 and S6 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 22nd April at 12 noon led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- S6 pupils will have an Assembly at 12 noon.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents' participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2025-26 S6 year group.

S4 and S5 pupils returning to St Thomas of Aquin's will return to school week beginning Monday 1st June

22. St Thomas of Aquin's former pupils visit:

On Friday 6th of March St Thomas of Aquin's was visited by former pupils Molly and Nora who attended St Thomas of Aquin's in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Molly and Nora visited Fashion and Textile, Chemistry, and Computing Science classes and enjoyed their time at St Thomas of Aquin's.



If former pupils do wish to visit the school, please do get in touch and I can see what we can do to support.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 2 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 2nd March

The parent council raised £800 at the recent Burn's Night Ceilidh prior to the February break. The evening was a great success and the live ceilidh band had everyone dancing throughout the evening. The haggis supper and snacks were a great hit, and the Parent Council team look forward to hosting next year's event. Thanks to Katie and the organising team for a wonderful evening. Thanks to all who attended and donated to the event.

23. **Uniform:** I will be asking the Senior Leadership Team and Pupil Support Leaders to support our high standards of uniform wearing at St Thomas of Aquin's throughout the month of March. Thank you to families for supporting with the wearing of

    - School Tie
    - White shirt
    - School Trousers or Skirts (No Jeans/Joggers)
    - Black shoes
    - St Thomas of Aquin's Hooded tops or V-neck jumpers or non-logo black V-neck jumper or hooded top.

I will be meeting with pupils no wearing school uniform during Key Adult time during the month of March.

24. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mr Jamie Brown, Fixed-term English Teacher, who is the successful candidate for the Additional Learning Teacher secondment post for the St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community. Mr Brown will take up his post after the Easter holidays.

Congratulations to Mrs Melissa Ross, our Acting CL of Maths, who will become a permanent Maths Teacher in St Thomas of Aquin's from August.

25. **SSE** (Supported Self-Evaluation) **update and Leadership Team meeting:** The school received the following feedback from the CEC SSE Team:

Areas of strength:

- The school's values and vision noticeably underpin all aspects of school life.
- Positive relationships are apparent throughout the school.
- The best examples of Learning and Teaching are supported by the St Thomas LEARNS policy.
- The Learning Development Support Team (Pupil Support Leaders/Support for Learning/The Wellbeing Hub) is really positive and well-led.

Areas for improvement

- Review the quality assurance of learning and teaching
- All Lessons had Learning Intentions and Success Criteria [and plenaries]; next step is to support the consistent use of these learning techniques
- Differentiation in lessons is of varying experiences, support the consistent use of this targeted intervention
- Higher order questioning is required in the majority of lessons.

26. **Archdiocese visit to St Thomas of Aquin's**: On Tuesday 4th March, St Thomas of Aquin's welcomes Fr John Deighan who will be undertaking a morning of how the school supports the Catholic Faith and values to our pupils.

27. **2026 coursing information:**

S5 pupils experienced a coursing Assembly on Thursday 26th February to support their understanding of S6 coursing options: All S5 pupils will be coursed for at least 4 subjects in S6 unless they wish to study 3 Advanced Highers. Ms Mariani has sent out an email to all S5 pupils and parents can complete the MS Forms by Friday 13th of March: Course Choice S5 into S6 2026-2027 – Fill in form

Please find the coursing information on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

28. S4-S6 Final day and CEC study Leave guidance:

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils embarking on SQA exams will be **Wednesday 22nd April**. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan Assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4, S5 and S6 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 22nd April at 12 noon led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
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- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents' participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2025-26 S6 year group.

S4 and S5 pupils returning to St Thomas of Aquin's will return to school week beginning Monday 1st June

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in

MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY

St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, I hope you and your family enjoyed a restful February break. Please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 23rd February

29. Staffing: Congratulations to Mr Brown, Fixed-term English Teacher, who is the successful candidate for the Additional Learning Teacher secondment post for St Thomas of Aquin's Learning Community. Mr Brown will take up his post after the Easter holidays.

Congratulations to Mrs Ross, our Acting CL of Maths, who will become a permanent Maths Teacher in St Thomas of Aquin's from August.

30. **2026 coursing information:** S4 into S5 coursing window will be completed by Friday 13th February: Pupils submit their MS Form after a meeting with their Pupil Support Leader and spoken with home: Course Choice S4 into S5 2026-2027 – Fill in form

    S5 pupils will have a coursing Assembly on Thursday 26th February Lesson 2 to go over coursing options.

31. **S5 and S6 Parents Evening:** S5 and S6 Parents Evening will take place on Thursday 26th February.

32. **S5 and S6 Leadership Teams**: The S5 perfect team are organising a talent show on Wednesday 25th February at 4.00pm in the main hall. I hope this fun event will be a great success and once again I must thank this group for their work and positivity throughout the year.

The S6 leadership team have already raised over £500 for their chosen charity and will be organising the school's world book day event along with a S6 karaoke event in March. With only 7 school weeks left of their time at St Thomas of Aquin's, I would like to thank them again for a great year of planned events.

The final day for S4-S6 pupils will be on their first day back at school after the Easter holidays and I will be contacting S6 parents about the high standards I expect from the year group on that day.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 9th February. This week I am looking forward to our self-supported evaluation led by the City of Edinburgh Quality Improvement Education Team on Tuesday and Wednesday. I will be sharing the QIEO feedback at the next Parent Council in March.

I wish all St Thomas of Aquin's families a lovely February break and welcome back all pupils, in full school uniform, on Monday 23rd February.

1. **S1-S2 Tracking Reports:** S4-S6 tracking reports have been completed and will be issued to parents by 12th February.

2. **2026 coursing information:** Please find the link for the 2026 coursing choice sheets, course outlines, and HT presentations which have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

We have 124 out of 140 S3 into S4 course choices submitted: Please complete your child's S3 into S4 coursing using this link S3 into S4 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2026-2027

S4 into S5 coursing window started on Monday 2nd February and will be completed by Friday 13th February: Pupils submit their MS Form after a meeting with their Pupil Support Leader and spoken with home: Course Choice S4 into S5 2026-2027 – Fill in form

3. **Consultation on Mobile Phone use in Schools:** To pupils, parents, and staff colleagues: please continue to complete the surveys for mobile phones: Note the closing date of **Monday 2 March** – any responses received after this date cannot be included in the analysis. No information is sought that is not relevant or that would identify any individual. Please contact Lind Lees if you require further information: Linda Lees | Head of Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning | Email: linda.lees@edinburgh.gov.uk

4. **S5 and S6 Parents Evening:** S5 and S6 parents evening will take place on Thursday 26th February.

5. **Supporting S4-S6 English folio work:**. The folio accounts for 30% of the final grade in Nat 5 and Higher. Pupils have to hand in a completed folio on the dates below and in the SQA template which is attached. Please also be aware that individual English class teachers may set an earlier class deadline to allow for final checks before submission.

Nat 5 English folio 27th February. Higher English folio 13th March

6. **S5 and S6 Leadership Teams**: The S5 perfect team are organising a talent show on Wednesday 25th February at 4.00pm in the main hall. I hope this fun event will be a great success and once again I must thank this group for their work and positivity throughout the year.

The S6 leadership team have already raised over £500 for their chosen charity and will be organising the school's world book day event along with an S6 Karaoke event in March. With only 7 school weeks left of their time at St Thomas of Aquin's, I would like to thank them again for a great year of planned events.

The final day for S4-S6 pupils will be on their first day back at school after the Easter holidays and I will be contacting S6 parents about the high standards I expect from the year group on that day.

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MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 2nd February

7. **February 10th and 11th SSE:** The senior leadership are completing a summary report and presentation for the SSE team which I can share with all colleagues and the Parent Council by the end of this week. I will be holding pupil assemblies on Thursday 5th February at 9:00 for S1 and S2 pupils; 9:25 for S3 and S4 pupils; and 9:50 for S5 and S6 pupils

8. **Staffing:** As of Monday 2nd February until the end of May 2026 Ms Taylor will become Acting DHT on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Mrs Banks will become Acting PSL of St Margarets.

9. **S4-S6 Tracking Reports:** S4-S6 tracking reports will be completed by Tuesday 3rd February and issued to parents by Thursday 12th February.

10. **2026 coursing information:** Please find the link for the 2026 coursing choice sheets, course outlines, and HT presentations which have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

The S2 into S3 coursing window has closed and the school has 135 out of 139 S2 course choices into our database. Thank you to pupils and parents for their support.

The S3 into S4 coursing will finish this week. Please complete your child's S3 into S4 coursing using this link S3 into S4 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2026-2027

S4 into S5 coursing window will start from Monday 2nd February and Ms Mariani will send out an MS Forms link this week.

S5 into S6 coursing will start after the February break

If you require any information on coursing, please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader or your child's Year Head.

11. **Consultation on Mobile Phone use in Schools:** To pupils, parents, and staff colleagues: please continue to complete the surveys for mobile phones: Note the closing date of **Monday 2nd March** – any responses received after this date cannot be included in the analysis. No information is sought that is not relevant or that would identify any individual. Please contact Linda Lees if you require further information: Linda Lees | Head of Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning | Email: linda.lees@edinburgh.gov.uk

12. **S5 and S6 Parents Evening:** S5 and S6 parents evening will take place on Thursday 26th February.

13. **Supporting S4-S6 English folio work:**. The folio accounts for 30% of the final grade in Nat 5 and Higher. Pupils have to hand in a completed folio on the dates below and in the SQA template. Please also be aware that individual English class teachers may set an earlier class deadline to allow for final checks before submission.

Nat 5 English folio 27th February. Higher English folio 13th March

14. **Pipes and Drum Music update:** We are very pleased to let you know that we have been making progress on securing pipes and drums tuition for pupils in our school. Currently we are looking at starting with an 8-week taster block starting after Easter. We are working on finalising the day and time of the lesson with an available tutor. Also, we are delighted to let you know that we have secured a loan of instruments for this term (chanters and drum pads) and the SSPDT (Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust) are actively applying for funding to cover half of our tuition costs. Please do get in touch with the music department if you think your child would like to join this exciting project. Ms Patrick will be in touch again shortly with more information once it has been finalised.

15. **St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School LinkedIn**: We are using this format to share good practice of the school - please connect if you wish.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 26 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 26th January,

Our Parent Council meeting on Thursday 22nd January was very positive with a focus on how parents can support the improvement of our school. We will continue to discuss this at our next meeting on Tuesday 31st March. I would also like to thank the Parent Council for their planning for Saturday night's Ceilidh, and I hope everyone attending had a great evening.

16. **S1-S2 Tracking Reports:** Parents will receive the tracking reports from Monday 26th January. S4-S6 tracking reports will be completed from 19th January to Tuesday 3rd February and issued to parents by 12th February.

17. **2026 coursing information:** Please find the link for the 2026 coursing choice sheets, course outlines, and HT presentations which have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

The S2 into S3 coursing window will hopefully be completed by Friday 23rd January. Please complete this MS Forms link for your child's S2 coursing: S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2026-2027. I believe we are at 115 pupils completing their S2 coursing, thank you.

The S3 into S4 coursing window will start their coursing from Monday 19th January and this will be a one-to-one meeting with their Pupil Support Leader: Please complete your child's S3 into S4 coursing using this link S3 into S4 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2026-2027

If you require any information on coursing, please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader or your child's Yead Head.

18. **S6 Photos**: S6 photos will take place on Tuesday 27th January from 8.40am

19. **St Thomas of Aquin's Feast Day – Wednesday 28th January**: Mr Wotherspoon is planning assemblies in the main hall during lesson 1 to celebrate our Feast Day.

20. **Consultation on Mobile Phone use in Schools:** CEC are consulting pupils, parents, and staff on mobile phone use in schools so that our Elected Members can make an informed decision. This is not just about restricting phone use but is also about safe phone storage, exemptions, and other considerations. Surveys have been sent out week beginning Monday 19th of January and on Monday 26th of January in the Key Adult pupil bulletin as well as support in PSE to St Thomas of Aquin's pupils, parents, and staff to support their voices are heard in this conversation.. Note the closing date of **Monday 2nd March** – any responses received after this date cannot be included in the analysis. No information is sought that is not relevant or that would identify any individual. Please contact Lind Lees if you require further information: Linda Lees | Head of Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning | Email: linda.lees@edinburgh.gov.uk

21. Please find a link to the Scottish Government Teacher recruitment advert: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnMYYf2DthA. Well done to all those involved…can't believe we did not receive any Oscar nominations…

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

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MONDAY 19 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 19th January

22. Staffing: I hope to invite Maths candidates for interview week beginning Monday 26th January.

23. Learning, Teaching, and Skills update: As we move into the new term St Thomas' wishes to ensure that all lessons have the following essentials:

- colleagues meeting and greeting pupils at the classroom door
- providing an engaging starter task
- support pupils with a lesson learning intention

- providing pupils what the lesson's success criteria
- using time for a constructive plenary.

24. **S4-S6 Prelims**: Thanks to Ms Mariani, Mrs Waddell, our SQA exam invigilators, and all colleagues for support with prelims over the last 2 weeks. S4-S6 pupils return to school on Monday 19th January in full school uniform.

25. **S1-S2 Tracking Reports:** Tracking reports were to be completed by Friday 16th January and once quality assurance procedures have taken place, parents will receive the tracking reports by Monday 26th January.

26. **2026 coursing information:** Please find the link for the 2026 coursing choice sheets, course outlines, and HT presentations which have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

The S2 into S3 coursing window will start as of Monday 12th January and run until Friday 23rd January. Coursing will be completed in PSE and please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader if you require any further information once you have looked at the coursing information on the school website: Please complete this MS Forms link for your child's S2 coursing: S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2026-2027

S3 pupils will start their coursing from Monday 19th January and this will be a one-to-one meeting with their Pupil Support Leader.

27. **S6 Photos**: S6 photos will take place on Tuesday 27th January from 8.40am

28. **St Thomas of Aquin's Feast Day – Wednesday 28th January**: Mr Wotherspoon is planning for assemblies in the main hall during lesson 1 to celebrate our Feast Day.

29. **Parent Council Ceilidh:** Please find attached the up and coming Parent Council Ceilidh on Saturday 24th January at St Columba's RC Church Hall from 7pm. The MS Teams Parent Council meeting information should be sent out later this week.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

St Thomas is a community where all belong, guided by honesty and compassion, aspiring to grow in faith and learning, and supporting each other to fulfil our God-given potential.

Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 12 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 12th January

1. **Staffing:** An advert for a permanent Maths Teacher has gone live on myjobscotland and will close on Monday 12th January.

2. **Learning, Teaching, and Skills update:** As we move into the new term St Thomas' wishes to ensure that all lessons have the following essentials:
    - colleagues meeting and greeting pupils at the classroom door
    - providing an engaging starter task
    - support pupils with a lesson learning intention

- providing pupils what the lesson's success criteria
- using time for a constructive plenary.

Skills update: This term we are launching our exciting skills development strategy across the school community. School staff have been engaging with professional learning to develop the strategy since August. Skills development is a fundamental element of learning and teaching to ensure that our young people are equipped for their future whichever post school pathway they choose to pursue. The school community has decided to focus on meta skills. These transferable skills are highly important in developing our young people. More information can be found at the following link- Meta-skills - SDS

Throughout the course of this term, we will work with our young people to ensure that they are fully involved and at the centre of the skills launch. Each Faculty has pledged to focus on the development of one skill each term. Assemblies to launch the skills strategy will be delivered this month and we will continue to update the school community on new developments.

3. **S4-S6 Prelims**: S4-S6 Prelims are now up and running and Ms Mariani will be co-ordinating prelims and cover throughout this 2 week window. Best of luck to all of our pupils and thank you to all colleagues for their support with prelims

4. **S1-S2 Tracking Reports:** S1 and S2 tracking reports are to be completed by Friday 16th January.

5. **2026 coursing information:** Please find the link for the 2026 coursing choice sheets, course outlines, and HT presentations which have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

The school follows a coursing timeline in which S2 pupils moving into S3 will be coursed first; then S3 pupils into S4; and finally after prelims have ben completed, S4 and S5 pupils into S5 and S6.

Parents will sign off their child's coursing: The S2 into S3 coursing window will start as of Monday 12th January and run until Friday 23rd January. Coursing will be completed in PSE. Please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader if you require any further information once you have looked at the coursing information on the school website.

S3 pupils will start their coursing from Monday 19th January and this will be a one to one meeting with their Pupil Support Leader.

I will keep this area on the HT briefing for the next 8 weeks so parents have an update on how coursing is taking shape.

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's Feast Day**: Mr Wotherspoon will be co-ordinating the plans for the 2026 Feast Day celebrations.

7. **Parent Council meeting:** There will be an MS Teams Parent Council meeting on Thursday 22nd January from 6.30-8.30pm. The Parent Council will support with a link to the meeting.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 15 DECEMBER

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's please find the last HT briefing of 2025, week beginning Monday 15th December

Congratulations to Ms Harley and the Drama Club for a great Drama performance last Wednesday afternoon to all S1 pupils and to Ms Landsburgh and the Modern Language Faculty for a great S2 Tapas experience on Thursday…. What a staff we have in this school!
The last day of term will be a non-uniform day in which pupils can choose to wear appropriate non-uniform to school: no football colours and I will support pupils who come to school in clothing that the senior leadership team would consider not appropriate to wear to a school. Pupils can bring in a £1 donation which will be collected at Key Adult to support the Sisters of Mercy.

Having said that, can ask all parents and pupils to support wearing full school uniform to school Monday to Thursday – a reminder that black and grey Jeans are not part of the school uniform.

1. **Supporting the founders of St Thomas of Aquin's**: St Thomas of Aquin's is running our annual Advent Collection for the **St Catharine's Convent Homeless Project**. Please take time to bring in 3 or 4 (even 6 or 7) items for donation. St Thomas of Aquin's is a school of 818 pupils and 100 staff…we could make such a difference this advent.

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's SSE: February 10th and 11th February:** The identified City of Edinburgh self-supported evaluation that St Thomas of Aquin's will undertake will take place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th February. Please find attached the parent letter outlining the 2 days. I believe St Thomas of Aquin's is in a good place to undergo a CEC SSE due to the 2.3 and 3.1 voluntary SSEs that we planned ourselves over the last 2 years. The February CEC SSE directs us to a potential HMIe inspection in the later part of 2026 to early 2027 and I believe that by focussing on our consistency in leadership, nurture, learning and engagement we will show our continued journey towards being the best version of ourselves.

I would like the Parent Council meeting in January to have an agenda item about the up and coming February SSE.

3. **December course choice updates**: Please find the attached the updated December draft course choices for session 2026-27 I will finalise all course sheets in January 2026 and send them to parents and place the documents on the school website. I have also updated the attainment and curriculum policy – please find the link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/School-Curriculum-and-Attainment-Policy-Dec-2025.pdf .

4. **Parking and pickup:** I have been emailed by a homeowner who lives on Lauriston Gardens. The member of the public is concerned with car owners who may pick up their children from St Thomas of Aquin's parking in spots which means the residents of the street cannot access parking. The member of the public has asked me to correspond with our school community to ask for this to be passed on.

5. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – I am looking forward to another great evening.

6. **Last day of term:** The last day of term is Friday 19th December and the school will plan S4-S6 and S1-S3 Assemblies. School will close at 1pm. There will be a staff meeting at 1.30pm.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 8 DECEMBER

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 8th December

7. **Supporting the founders of St Thomas of Aquin's**: St Thomas of Aquin's is running our annual Advent Collection for the **St Catharine's Convent Homeless Project**. Please take time to bring in 3 or 4 (even 6 or 7) items for donation. St Thomas of Aquin's is a school of 818 pupils and 100 staff…we could make such a difference this advent. Please see the donation poster attached.

8. **Staffing:** The Acting Curricular Leader of Maths interviews took place on Friday 28th November and I am pleased to announce that Mrs Melissa Ross was the successful candidate. Mrs Ross will start on January 12th 2026.

9. **December course choice updates and S2, 3, 4 Assemblies**: Please find the attached the updated December draft course choices for session 2026-27 I will finalise all course sheets in January 2026 and send them to parents and place the documents on the school website. I have also updated the attainment and curriculum policy – please find the link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/School-Curriculum-and-Attainment-Policy-Dec-2025.pdf .

I will be holding S2, S3, and S4 coursing assemblies on Tuesday 9th December and the presentation is attached for parents to view

- S3 year group at 2.10
- S2 year group at 2.40
- S4 year group at 3.10

10. **S6 Leadership:** The S6 LT are planning an **S5-6 Ceilidh on Thursday 11th December** from 7.00-9.00 and for all S1-S6 pupils a **Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 12th December**. Well done to the **S6 Leadership team** for continuing to impress with their planning and impact. The **S5 Prefects** will be deciding the best Faculty Christmas door winners on Wednesday 17th December…the school is looking great

11. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please log on to Parent Pay to buy your tickets

12. **Last day of term:** The last day of term is Friday 19th December and the school will plan S4-S6 and S1-S3 assemblies. School will close at 1pm. There will be a staff meeting at 1.30pm.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY 1 DECEMBER

Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 1st December

I am looking forward to the S3 Parents Evenings this week, Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th December. Please find the November school improvement plan update attached. The Parent Council meeting on Wednesday 26th November was another positive meeting chaired so well by Mrs Beech-Brandt. The school wishes to work with all parents of St Thomas of Aquin's to plan for a competitive sports system at the school. To have a system in place that supports pupils the school will need extensive parent volunteers; if you are a parent who can commit to weekend sports fixtures then please email the parent council, explain your time commitment, and sport preferences and we can start planning for session 2026-27.

1. **Staffing:** The Acting Curricular Leader of Maths interviews took place on Friday 28th November and I am pleased to announce that Mrs Melissa Ross was the successful candidate. The Maths Teacher we offered the fixed-term Maths post to has declined our offer and I will continue planning to support the Maths Faculty with staffing.

I emailed all staff and parents last week with the update on Mrs Hastings position at St Thomas of Aquin's. Mrs Hastings will be returning to Forrester High School at the end of term due to a recall in staffing backfill. Mrs Hastings time at St Thomas of Aquin's has delivered significant positive outcomes for pupils, staff, and parents with robust improvements in Key Adult Time and the focus on RAISE; the data sharing and positive impact of the attainment of vulnerable pupils; the increase in participation of pupil voice and the systems improving our pupil parliament; the Bring your Parent to School experience and other family learning events. This summary does not do justice to what Mrs Hastings has brought to St Thomas of Aquin's in terms of her integrity, professionalism, hard work, fun, and interpersonal skills; she will be greatly missed by us all.

2. **Bring a Parent to School**: An excellent day on Thursday 20th November in which approximately 20 parents experienced learning and engagement at St Thomas of Aquin's. Thank to Mrs Hastings for organising, the staff for volunteering, and for the parents in attending.

3. **S6 Leadership:** The S6 Leadership Team are planning an **S5-6 Ceilidh on Thursday 11th December** from 6.30-8.30 and for all S1-S6 pupils a **Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 12th of December**. Well done to the team for continuing to impress with their planning and impact.

4. **Last day of term:** The last day of term is Friday 19th December and the school will plan S4-S6 and S1-S3 assemblies. School will close at 1pm. There will be a staff meeting at 1.30pm.

5. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please log on to ParentPay to buy your tickets

7. **Faculty Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

8. **Supporting St Thomas of Aquin's families**: Please find an attachment to support families at St Thomas of Aquin's

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 24th November. The S6 Leadership Team visited Boroughmuir High School on Friday to attend a conference on pupil leadership. I have been very impressed with the team's work in October and November. They continue to plan and deliver pupil events for all ages – S1 and S2 Halloween disco, S3 and S4 Football tournament, Music on Wednesday lunchtimes whilst also raising money for their nominated charity Rock Trust.

6. **Staffing:** The Acting Curricular Leader of Maths interviews will take place on Friday 28th November. I am interviewing 3 candidates.

7. **S4-S6 Tracking:** Tracking reports will be completed by Friday 28th November and issued to parents and pupils week beginning Monday 8th December.

3. **Uniform in November**: Can I ask parents to support pupils not wearing jeans to school. The full school uniform is:

Black shoes; black school skirt or trousers; white shirt and school tie; non-branded black jumper or a school branded hoodie.

4. **Course Choice 2026-27 TT**: I will be completing the meetings with Curricular Leaders by the end of November and will update all staff, pupils, and parents with regards to course choices.

6. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please log on to Parent Pay to buy your tickets

9. **Faculty Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 17th November,

8. **Staffing:** Ms Cairns and I are interviewed candidates for a fixed-term Maths post on Friday 14th November. We have offered a position to a Maths Teacher, and they will get back to us by next week with their decision. The Acting Curricular Leader of Maths post closed Friday 14th November and I will start the process of planning for interviews this week.

Congratulations to Mrs Banks who will be joining Support for Learning Faculty on a fixed term part time basis along with Ms Lynsey Bruce McGhee.

9. **Catholic Education week**: Please find the following plans for Catholic Education week

- St Margaret's Day Celebrations – Friday 14 November
- Key Adult Prayer & Reflection Each Morning (Tannoy)
- Assemblies for all year groups – Monday 17 November
- Carfin Pilgrimage – Tuesday 18 November
- Primary School Visits (Throughout the week)

5. **Uniform in November**: I will be focusing on all St Thomas of Aquin's pupils wearing full school uniform to school. If pupils are in need of uniform support, then the school can help. Please find the link to the form for parents to request support with uniform: School uniform support – Fill in form. Can I ask parents to support pupils not wearing jeans to school.

6. **Course Choice 2026-27 TT**: Please find the draft 2026-27 Course Choice sheets for session 2026-27. I will continue to meet with CLs to ensure staffing and courses are accurate for our May 2026 changeover. Please find a link to the curriculum and achievement policy on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Draft-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-and-Attainment-Policy.pdf

5. **Bringing your Parent to school day**: We look forward to 20 parents visiting St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday 20th November to experience what a school day is like at St Thomas of Aquin's.

6. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council meeting will take place via MS Teams on Wednesday 26th November. The Parent Council will send out a link to the meeting. I would like to offer an update on St Thomas of Aquin's September Insight data as well as a discussion on competitive sports at St Thomas of Aquin's

7. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please log on to ParentPay to buy your tickets

10. **Faculty Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 10th November

10. **His Grace Leo Cushley visits St Thomas of Aquin's**: Please find pictures of His Grace Leo Cushley's visit to St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday 6th November. Thank you to Mr Wotherspoon for planning this important and successful event.

11. **Catholic Education week**: Please find the following plans for Catholic Education week

- St Margaret's Day Celebrations – Friday 14 November
- Key Adult Prayer & Reflection Each Morning (Tannoy)
- Assemblies for all year groups – Monday 17 November
- Carfin Pilgrimage – Tuesday 18 November
- Primary School Visits (Throughout the week)

12. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Philippa Hastings who was the successful candidate for the new fixed-term Senior Development Officer post with a focus on Curriculum and Achievement which starts in January 2026. A Fixed-term Maths post closed on Friday 7th November and interview will take place as soon as possible. The Acting Curricular Leader of Maths post is live on Myjobscotland and will close Friday 14th November.

7. **Uniform in November**: I will be focusing on all St Thomas of Aquin's pupils wearing full school uniform to school. If pupils are in need of uniform support, then the school can help. Please find the link to the form for parents to request support with uniform: School uniform support – Fill in form

4. **S2 Parents Evening :** S2 Parents Evenings will take place on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th November.

7. **Bringing your Parent to school day**: We look forward to 20 parents visiting St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday 20th November to experience what a school day is like at St Thomas of Aquin's.

8. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council meeting will take place via MS Teams on Wednesday 26th November. The Parent Council will send out a link to the meeting.

8. **Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please save the date: Tickets are now on sale via ParentPay.

11. **Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 3rd November

13. **His Grace Leo Cushley visits St Thomas of Aquin's**: His Grace Leo Cushley will be visiting St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday morning. Thank you to Mr Wotherspoon for all of his planning.

2. **Staffing:** Fixed-term Senior Development Officer interviews (Curriculum and Achievement) will take place on Friday 7th November.

8. **Uniform in November**: I will be focusing on all St Thomas of Aquin's pupils wearing full school uniform to school. If pupils are in need of uniform support, then the school can help. Please find the link to the form for parents to request support with uniform: School uniform support – Fill in form

5. **S2 Parents Evening :** S2 Parents Evenings will take place on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th November.

9. **Bringing your Parent to school day**: We look forward to 20 parents visiting St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday 20th November to experience what a school day is like at St Thomas of Aquin's.

9. **Is this too early…?...Christmas Concert**: Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Thursday 18th December** – please Save the date: Tickets will go on sale shortly.

12. **Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

Regards
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MONDAY 27 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the Briefing for week beginning Monday 27th October

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

1. **Staffing:** I am pleased to announce that Ms Chrissie Jaquet is the successful candidate for the Fixed-term Art post and will start with us in January. Fixed-term Senior Development Officer interviews (Curriculum and Achievement) will take place on Friday 7th November.

2. **Parents Evenings and S1-S3 Tracking Reports:** S4 Parents Evenings will take place on Monday 27th October and S2 Parents Evenings will take place on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th November. S1-S3 Tracking Reports have been sent to parents on Friday 24th October.

3. **Empowered – Fragments of us:** Congratulations to Ms Harley and the 80 St Thomas of Aquin's pupils who have had their poems published in "Empowered" Fragments of us book. St Thomas of Aquin's contribution to the anthology is significant and powerful. Thank you

4. **Halloween Disco:** The planned S6 Leadership Team's S1 and S2 Halloween Disco will take place on Thursday 30th October from 6-8pm in the main hall/Drama studio.

5. **S6 Prom – change of date:** The S6 Prom will now take place on Wednesday 10th June 2026.

6. **Achievement**: Please continue to send in St Thomas of Aquin's pupils/children achievements so we can share and praise - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Regards
Christopher Santini

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FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's.

A 2nd briefing of the week to update you on staffing. I wish you all the best for the October break.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant. Thank you to our Lay Chaplains for

supporting these Masses. I would also like to thank one of St Thomas of Aquin's Lay Chaplains, Miriam Reynolds, who is supporting S5 pupils hosting a Scripture Union Group every Wednesday lunchtime in Room 2.08.

1. **Staffing:** St Thomas of Aquin's welcomes Mrs Alejandra Del Valle Rubio and Mrs Virgine Brodie who are both working part-time in the Modern Language faculty. I would like to congratulate Ms Naomi Strathie who is the successful candidate for the permanent part-time History post at St Thomas of Aquin's.

I am pleased to announce that the Fixed-term Senior Development Officer's post for curriculum and Achievement is now live on Myjobscotland: https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/city-edinburgh-council/jobs/senior-development-officer-st-thomas-aquins-high-school-444125 .

2. **Insight 2025:** Please find a 2025 St Thomas of Aquin's Insight analysis. Congratulations to us all – we have delivered some excellent attainment outcomes for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-2025-Insight-analysis.pdf . I hope that the during the Inservice and Parent Council I am afforded some time to go through our Insight attainment analysis.

3. **Tracking Reports update:** S1-S3 Tracking are being completed and will be sent to parents on our return from the October break.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 6 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 6th October. I wish you all an enjoyable October break, how did we get to October so quickly?, and we will welcome back all pupils on Tuesday 21st October.

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant. Thank you to our Lay Chaplains for supporting these Masses.

4. **Staffing:** Longleat interviews for a permanent part-time History post will take place on Tuesday 7th October.

2. **Insight 2025:** Please find a 2025 St Thomas of Aquin's Insight analysis. Congratulations to us all – we have delivered some excellent attainment outcomes for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-2025-Insight-analysis.pdf . I hope that the during the next Parent Council I am afforded some time to go through our insight attainment analysis.

3. **Tracking Reports update:** S4-S6 tracking reports have been sent to pupils and parents on Friday 3rd October. S1-S3 tracking is being completed and will be sent to parents on our return from the October break.

4. **Duke of Edinburgh:** Mrs Rocke is planning a Duke of Edinburgh assembly for all interested S3 pupils after school on Wednesday 8th October. A finalised Silver DofE programme for around 25 pupils is also being planned along with over 20 pupils wishing to compete Gold Duke of Edinburgh. Thank you to Mrs Rocke, Mr Kennedy, and Miss Reid.

5. **Pupil Leadership**: As part of the school improvement plan, St Thomas of Aquin's is actively supporting pupils to lead school improvements. I would like to thank the S6 Leadership team in raising £200 for the Rock trust charity, planning the S1-2 Halloween disco, supporting Wednesday pupil-led lunchtime music events, and for leading P6&7 parents mornings for the last 3 Fridays. I would like to thank the S5 Prefects who are supporting daily break time and lunchtime experiences and now wish to plan a S5 Prefect event. Finally, thanks to all members of the pupil parliament who are supporting our Teacher interview process.

I will continue to support pupils' leadership experiences at St Thomas to improve the school' leadership of change improvement area.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 29th September

Friday Mass: Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to attend our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

During Key Adult this week there will be a focus on Heartstart – please find the presentation attached.

1. **Staffing:** Interviews for the Maths permanent part-time post took place on Tuesday 23rd September. I have decided not to appoint and will readvertise the post. Longleat interviews for a permanent part-time History post will take place on Tuesday 7th October.

2. **Tracking Reports update:** S4-S6 tracking reports will be sent to pupils and parents on Friday 3rd October. S1-S3 Tracking are being completed and will be sent to parents on our return from the October break.

3. **Parent Council update**: The 1st Parent Council meeting of 2025-26 took place on Tuesday 23rd September and I would like to thank Josephine Beech-Brandt for chairing a very positive meeting. The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th November via MS Teams.

An area for all Colleagues to support with is homestudy consistency for S1 and S2 pupils: This will be discussed at Leadership Teams meetings in October.

4. **Duke of Edinburgh**: Mrs Rocke is planning a Duke of Edinburgh assembly for all interested S3 pupils after school on Wednesday 8th October. A finalised Silver DofE programme for around 25 pupils is also being planned along with over 20 pupils wishing to compete Gold Duke of Edinburgh. Thank you to Mrs Rocke, Mr Kennedy and Miss Reid

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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St Thomas is a community where all belong, guided by honesty and compassion, aspiring to grow in faith and learning, and supporting each other to fulfil our God-given potential.

MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 22nd September

5. **Staffing:** We say goodbye to Miss Foggo and wish her all the best for her new position at The Royal High School. Interviews for the Maths permanent part-time post will take place on Tuesday 23rd September. Longleat interviews for a permanent part-time History post will take place on Tuesday 7th October. A fixed-term Art and Design post will be advertised in due course.

2. **Vision and Values**: Please find attached the rationale document for our change in the school vision: *St Thomas is a community where all belong, guided by honesty and compassion, aspiring to grow in faith and learning, and supporting each other to fulfil our God-given potential.*

3. **Sports Leaders:** Congratulations to S4 Georgina Muir and S4 Euan Anderson will be the Young Ambassadors for St. Thomas this year.

4. **S6 Leadership Team and S5 prefects**: The S6 Leadership Team are planning an S1-S2 Halloween disco, an S5-S6 Ceilidh (December), a Culture day/week in March and a Sports Tournament in November and March. I meet with the team every 2 weeks to support their leadership of these events. The S6 Leadership Team are also supporting the P7 and P6 parent visits. The S5 Prefects are supporting break and lunchtime around the school, and I have been really impressed with them – they are planning a lunchtime club for S1 and S2 pupils. Congratulations to these new leaders.

5. **Friday Mass:** Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will the celebrant.

6. **Football Trip update**: Mrs Rizza has spoken with the pupils and communicated with parents regarding the football trip being cancelled. Although the cancellation is out with our control, I am hoping that a new Premier league game can be identified for the school to attend.

7. **P7 parents visits and Parent Council meeting**: On Friday 19th September, we welcomed our first of 4 primary parents visits to St Thomas of Aquin's. I believe the event was a great success and we will continue these visits right up to the October break.

The 1st Parent Council meeting of the term is on Tuesday 23rd September from 6.30pm

Regards
Christopher Santini

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TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Tuesday 16th September

1. **Vision and Values**: After consultation with pupils, parents, and staff our school values will remain the same and a draft vision statement has been created: *St Thomas is a community where all belong, guided by honesty and compassion, aspiring to grow in faith and learning, and supporting each other to fulfil our God-given potential.*

I would like to thank Ms McGowan, Mr Wotherspoon, and Ms Mariani for their work on.

2. **S6 Charity**: The Rock Trust is the nominated S6 charity for session 2025-26: https://www.rocktrust.org/

3. **Staffing:** Mrs Del Valle and Mrs Brodie have been appointed to the Modern Languages faculty and we hope they will start their fixed term contracts as soon as possible. Interviews for the Maths permanent part-time post will take place on Tuesday 23rd September. A permanent part-time History post closes on the 16th September. A fixed-term Art and Design post will be advertised in due course.

Ms Foggo has been successful in a History and Modern Studies post at The Royal High School and will be leaving us on Friday 19th September. I would like to thank Ms Foggo for all her work and support for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils and on behalf of the school wish her all the best for her next stage in her career.

4. **S1 out of school at break and lunchtime:** S1 pupils will be allowed out of the school building at break and lunchtime from Tuesday 16th September.

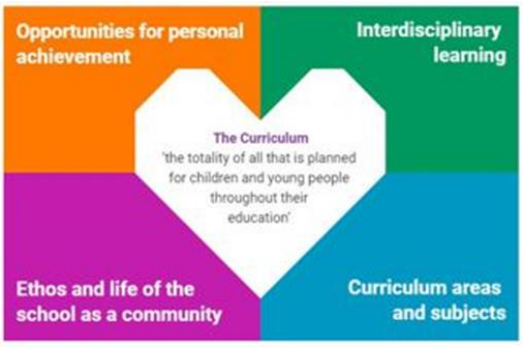
5. **Friday Mass:** Pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed to our weekly Friday Mass starting at 8.10am in St Thomas of Aquin's Oratory. Fr Adrian Porter will be the celebrant.

6. **Curriculum review**: On Tuesday 8th September I attended the CEC HT meeting on Curriculum. One of the keynote speakers was Ollie Brae from Education Scotland. Ollie Brae spoke of the curriculum changes that we are and will be part of and the planning and implementation that is taking place across the totality of the curriculum. Although tangible change may not be with us for a 1 ½ years it is important that I lead you through the curriculum vision and planning until our SDO (1 year post) starts in January 2026 and then DHT Curriculum (2027) are in place.

How did we get to curriculum change? please consider reading section 5 of the OECD Scottish Education Curriculum for Excellence 2021 paper: as a summary of the pathway for Scottish Education: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/scotland-s-curriculum-for-excellence_bf624417-en/full-report.html.

If you wish a fuller account for the **case for change** then please read the following Education Scotland paper: https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/cices/uploads/sites/10666/2024/11/13214842/CIC-A-CASE-FOR-CHANGE-PILOT-CURRICULUM-REVIEWS141124.pdf

The 4 capacities and delivery of the curriculum (please see below) will be supported with a refining of technical framework. Please consider reading the following paper entitles: The Curriculum Technical Framework to support your understanding.: https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/cices/uploads/sites/10666/2024/12/19093918/CIC-Towards-an-Evolved-Technical-Framework-Discussion-Paper-FINAL-191224-1.pdf



Regards
Christopher Santini

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Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 8th September. A reminder to all parents that next Monday 15th September, is an Edinburgh holiday and the school is closed.

1. **Staffing:** Interviews for Modern Languages fixed term part-time post will take place on Thursday 11th September. Interviews for the Maths permanent part-time post will take place by mid-September. A permanent part-time History post will be advertised shortly. A fixed-term Art and Design post will be advertised in due course.

2. **S5 Prefects Leadership Team 2025-26:** Please find the 32 S5 Prefects for session 2025-26 who will be supporting breaktime and lunchtime around the school. I will be meeting with the S5 Prefect team every 2 weeks to advise and guide the throughout their year.

3. **2025-26 Extracurricular clubs**: Pupils can continue to sign up to the extensive lunchtime and after school clubs via the QR codes in school or via the Pupil Bulletin. Please see the attachment for an update.

4. **Attainment update on the school website**: The school website has been updated with the 2025 SQA attainment data: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2025-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-SQA-results.pdf

5. **S4-S6 Tracking Reports**: Over the next 2 weeks all S4-S6 Pupils will have their 1st tracking report completed by their teachers. These reports will then be quality assured by Curricular Leaders and Ms Mariani. Ms Mariani will be in touch regarding the release date – which should be around week beginning Monday 29th September.

5. **Up and coming events: Senior school pupils and parents' information evening**: You are cordially invited to attend a Senior Phase information evening on Thursday 18th September 2025. This event will be held in school from 5.30pm until 6.45pm. There will be presentations from guest speakers including Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh college, LEAPS, SAAS and University of Edinburgh. Please can you register your attendance below (spaces are limited to 3 per family) https://forms.office.com/e/n1KZkCTc2T. **Registration will close on 17th September 5pm.**

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for Monday 1st September

1. **Staffing:** Adverts for a Modern Languages fixed-term part-time post closes on Tuesday 2nd September and a Maths permanent part-time post on Wednesday 3rd September. A History permanent part-time post will be advertised shortly. The new Senior Development post for 1 year (January 2026 to January 2027) focusing on Curriculum and Achievement has been brought to the CEC staffing board.

2. **S6 Leadership Team 2025-26:** After interview for Sports, Equalities, and Music and Art Captains last week I am delighted to congratulate **Sports Captains**: Louise Joyce, Hugo Boyle, Robin Longino; **Music and Arts Captains**: Princess Owiafe and Alana Borthwick; **Equalities Captains**: Asiyah

Williams, Maria Wilk, Josephine Chan. I meet with the S6 Leadership team on a weekly basis and I will be asking the Parent Council to support their plans throughout 2025-26.

3. **2025-26 Extracurricular clubs**: Please find the 2025-26 extra-curricular clubs which are starting this week. Pupils can sign up via the QR codes in school or via the pupil bulletin. A huge thanks to all members of staff who are leading these opportunities for our pupils.

4. **Congratulations:** Before the summer holidays Ms Harley and the English Faculty supported English classes to work on writing submissions for the latest creative writing competition released by the UK organisation, Young Writers. Through the strategic work of Ms Harley and English colleagues, 129 submissions were placed and last week the school received certificates and permission slips for the 120 pupils who have been selected for publication. A great piece of work.

5. **SQA communication – important update for S4-S6 pupils and parents:** I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2025-26. Senior pupils will complete all their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. All senior pupils will be presented for all their National Qualifications subjects, and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is required.

6. **Up and coming events:**

Senior school pupils and parents' information evening: Thursday 18th September

Primary P6 & P7 Parents visit to St Thomas of Aquin's: Up to 60 P6 and 7 Associated Parents (per morning) are invited visit St Thomas of Aquin's on each of the following dates: Friday 19th and Friday 26th of September / Friday 3rd and Friday 10th October from 11.30-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Each Friday morning will involve meeting the HT in the staffroom for an initial coffee/tea, a tour of the school by the S6 Leadership Team (in groups of 10-20 parents), and then a Q&A session for 20 minutes in a classroom. Why Fridays and why during the school day? Parents will get a direct experience of our school community and be able to feel and see our school in action.

If you are an interested parent, please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information: **Name of parent; Name of pupil and Primary school; Date of visit.**

7. **Parent Council meeting dates**: A warm welcome to the new academic year, especially to our new S1 parents! We hope your young people have settled in well. Our first Parent Council meeting of the year will take place on **Tuesday 23rd September 2025 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the school**. If you are a new S1 parent, or if you haven't attended one of our meetings before, we'd love to meet you! Please join us from **6:00 pm** for an informal chat before the meeting begins.

Upcoming Parent Council Meeting Dates for Your Diary:

Meeting 2: Wednesday 26th November 6.30pm – via MS Teams
Meeting 3: Thursday 22nd January 6.30pm – via MS Teams
Meeting 4: Tuesday 31st March 6.30pm– at St Thomas of Aquin's
Meeting 5 - AGM: Wednesday 27th May 6.30pm – at St Thomas of Aquin's
Communication: To facilitate easier communication, we have a WhatsApp Community group to share information about events organised by the Parent Council. As this is a community page, only the Parent Council administrators can post messages to keep communication concise and to the point. If you haven't done so, we encourage you to join the group using this link: Join our WhatsApp Community.

Fundraising: The Parent Council supports a variety of projects within the school, and there are several ways you can help:

- **Easy fundraising** – Shop online, and participating retailers will donate to the school at no extra cost to you. Sign up here.
- GoodHub platform – Make regular donations or support specific events, such as our annual Ceilidh.
- **50:50 Club** – A monthly lottery where 50% of proceeds fund school activities and equipment, and 50% are awarded as cash prizes. The more members we have, the bigger the prizes and the greater the support for the school.(Forms attached.)

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com We look forward to a fantastic year ahead! St. Thomas of Aquin's High School Parent Council: All parents welcome

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 25 AUGUST

Good morning to parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 25th August

1. **Staffing:** Adverts for a Modern Languages fixed-term part-time post and Maths permanent part-time post are being created and hopefully going live as soon as possible.

I have decided that I will advertise for a permanent 3rd Depute Head Teacher next Autumn (August 2026) as I hope this will support a greater number of applications from around the country. This means that I hope to create a new Senior Development post for 1 year (January 2026 to January 2027) focussing on Curriculum and Achievement.

2. **CL/HT Attainment meetings**: I will be meeting with all Curricular Leaders to discuss their 2025 SQA attainment and faculty planning during September.

3. **House Captain interviews**: Interviews for Captains in Sports, Equalities, Music, and Art will take place on Tuesday 26th August.

I am also creating S5 Prefect positions and will be meeting with interested S5 pupils after Key Adult on Monday 25th August.

4. **Coursing and SQA communication – important update for S4-S6 pupils and parents**: Ms Mariani will be finishing S4-S6 recoursing by the end of this week. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2025-26. Senior pupils will complete all their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. All senior pupils will be presented for all their National Qualifications subjects, and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is required.

5. **Lunchtime and afterschool clubs**: Mrs Hastings is co-ordinating break and lunchtime clubs which I hope will be up and running in September.

6. **Up and coming events:**

Senior school pupils and parents' information evening: Thursday 18th September

Primary P6 & P7 parents visit to St Thomas of Aquin's: Up to 60 P6 and 7 Associated Parents (per morning) are invited visit St Thomas of Aquin's on each of the following dates: Friday 19th and Friday 26th September and Friday 3rd and Friday 10th of October from 11.30-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Each Friday morning will involve meeting the HT in the staffroom for an initial coffee/tea, a tour of the school by the S6 Leadership Team (in groups of 10-20 parents), and then a Q&A session for 20 minutes in a classroom.

Why Fridays and why during the school day? Parents will get a direct experience of our school community and be able to feel and see our school in action.

If you are an interested parent, please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information:

- **Name of parent**
- **Name of pupil and Primary school**
- **Date of visit**

7. **Parent Council meeting dates**: Please find the following dates for Parent Council meetings which will start at 6.30pm

- Tuesday 23rd of September 6.30pm: St Thomas of Aquin's
- Wednesday 26th of November 6.30pm: MS Teams remote meeting
- Thursday 22nd of January 6.30pm: MS Teams remote meeting
- Tuesday 31st of March 6.30pm: St Thomas of Aquin's
- Wednesday 27th of May 6.30pm: St Thomas of Aquin's

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 18 AUGUST

Good morning to parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 18th August:

Our new S1 pupils have settled in very well and we are continuing to celebrate so many senior pupils with their exam successes. I have asked Mrs Hastings to plan with colleagues the lunchtime and afterschool clubs. I will continue to visit Keir Street and surrounding areas as much as possible during break and lunchtime to support our pupils' good behaviour. Please can you speak with your children regarding how important it is for them to continue their high standards of behaviour in the local community.

I am meeting with representatives of the Parent Council this week to identify dates for our 5 Parent Council meetings this session. I will update all parents in the coming weeks.

1. **Staffing:** Adverts for a Modern Languages fixed-term part-time post and Maths permanent part-time post are being created and hopefully going live as soon as possible.

2. **School Attainment**: Please find attached a St Thomas of Aquin's 2025 School and Faculty summary attainment document which I will place on the school website. At a Parent Council meeting I will deliver a detailed attainment report which will be shared with all parents prior to the meeting.

3. **School Improvement Plan and Parents and Pupils Standards and Quality Report**: At the last Parent Council in May, I was asked to create a summary of the Standards and Quality Report. Please find attached a summary 10 page parent and pupil SQR document. The School Improvement Plan and the Standards and Quality Report (which I send to CEC) can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/

4. **Leadership and SLWG**: The following working groups will support the school improvement plan

    - Learning and Teaching
    - Wellbeing
    - Anti-Bullying
    - Skills
    - Leadership

5. **UNESCO 1 minute silence Friday 22nd August**: Thanks to Mrs Hunter, Madame Jean-Pierre, and Ms Mariani who will be supporting our minute's silence for the remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition at 11.00am on Friday 22nd August

MONDAY 23 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the last HT briefing email of session 2024-25.

St Thomas of Aquin's will close for summer holidays on Thursday 26th June from 1.00pm onwards. Assemblies will be held from 12 noon to say goodbye to pupils. Thursday 26th June will be a non-uniform day with a voluntary donation of £1 collected in Key Adult classes and donated to The Sisters of Mercy.
I would like to wish you and your families an enjoyable and relaxing summer holidays. St Thomas of Aquin's school will welcome back all pupils on Wednesday 13th August in full school uniform, to hopefully experience another successful session.

1. **P7/S1 Transition:** St Thomas of Aquin's experienced a very successful P7/S1 3-day visit last week. Thank you to Madame Jean-Pierre and the Learning and Development Support Team for their strategic an operational planning – you are a very good team!

2. **Staffing:** Longleet Interviews for a part-time permanent Art Teacher took place on Tuesday 17th June, unfortunately I have not brought any candidates through to a shortleet. I will plan next steps with Ms Wilson. St Thomas of Aquin's will also plan next steps for positions in Biology and RE on our return in August. We welcome back Mr Linden to St Thomas of Aquin's this week - it will be great to work with him in the school again. We are saying goodbye to Mrs Berry on Tuesday – Mrs Berry has

been a very good colleague to work with at St Thomas of Aquin's. Mrs Berry has supported the PE Faculty and extra-curricular activities so very well.

3. **S6 Leadership positions:** Congratulations to the following successful S6 pupils who are now part of the 2025-25 S6 Leadership Team. Interviews for Equalities, Sports, and Arts and Music Captains will take place in August:

Head Girl- Hannah Proudfoot
Head boy- Daniel Burns

Depute Head Girl- Ripley Woods
Depute Head Boy- Andriyko Kancir

St Margaret's House Captains: Nina Jasseh and Fleur Cordiner
St Andrew's House Captains: Cara Dunbar and Ruby Chambers
St Patrick's House Captains: Alice Perry and Kate Marr

4. **Achievement of pupils**: Please continue to tell St Thomas of Aquin's about the achievement of your children outside of school using the following link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 16 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

As we move into the last 2 weeks of term can I thank you all for your commitment to St Thomas of Aquin's. The school has completed the SQA exam calendar, moved into the 2025/25 Timetable, completed our Standards and Quality Report and drafted a School Improvement Plan. I am looking forward to welcoming 156 P7/S1 pupils to our school on Tuesday and I would like to thank Madame Jean-Pierre and all the Learning Development and Support Team for their work throughout 2025 to reach the P7/S1 visit.
Please find the HT briefing for Monday 16th June:

1. **Awards Ceremonies**: Thank you to all pupils, staff, and parents attending the S1-S6 Awards Ceremonies last week. A special thanks to Mrs Hastings for her strategic and operational lead with all the award ceremonies.

2. **P7/S1 Transition:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be welcoming 156 P7/S1 pupils to a 3-day visit on Tuesday 17th, Wednesday 18th, and Thursday 19th June.

3. **Staffing:** Longleet Interviews for a part-time permanent Art Teacher will take place on Tuesday 17th June. St Thomas of Aquin's also has adverts for a permanent full time Biology Teacher and a permanent part time Religious Education Teacher live on Myjobscotland closing on the 17th and 18th June. We welcome back Mrs Rutherford and Mrs Rocke this week - it will be great to work with

them in the school again. However, we will be saying goodbye to Mrs Ross after 13 years of her working at St Thomas of Aquin's. Mrs Ross has been a very good colleague to work with and has delivered so much impact for pupils at the school. Mrs Ross will be greatly missed, and I hope we can make her last 2 weeks as positive as possible.

4. **S6 Leadership positions:** S6 pupil leadership applicants will be interviewed by Ms Mariani and myself on Wednesday 18th June and by the Pupil Parliament on Thursday 19th June. Good luck to all the candidates. I will also be meeting with S5 pupils to start planning for S5 Prefect positions which will support break and lunchtime pupil experiences. I am hoping to have S5 Prefects in place by the end of August 2025.

5. **Achievement of pupils**: Please continue to tell St Thomas of Aquin's about the achievement of your children outside of school using the following link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

6. **Vision and Values Assemblies**: Vision and Values assemblies will take place on Monday 16th June.

7. **S3 2026 Paris Trip:** The Modern Languages Faculty are planning an S3 trip to Paris in April/May of 2026. Communication details are being sent out to all S3 pupils and parents.

The school will close for summer holidays on Thursday 26th June from 1.00pm onwards. Assemblies will be held from 12 noon to say goodbye to pupils.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 9 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 9th June

1. **Awards Ceremonies**: This week we will be hosting our Junior Award Ceremonies on the morning of Tuesday 10th June and our Senior Awards Ceremony on the evening of Wednesday 11th.

2. **School improvement planning:** A draft School Improvement Plan will be developed from 2024-25 the Standard and Quality Report's next steps. I am asking that SLT have 4 priorities in each Quality Indicator area which reflects the voices of pupils, staff, parents, and Local Authority/Scottish Government. Both documents will be shared with parents in August.

3. **P7/S1 Transition:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be welcoming 156 P7/S1 pupils to a 3-day visit on Tuesday 17th, Wednesday 18th, and Thursday 19th June.

4. **Staffing:** An advert for a part-time permanent Art Teacher closes on the 9th June. St Thomas of Aquin's also has adverts for a permanent full-time Biology Teacher and a permanent part-time Religious Education Teacher live on Myjobscotland closing on the 17th and 18th June.

5. **S6 Leadership positions:** S6 pupil leadership applications will close today. Ms Mariani will organise an S6 and staff vote this week, and the top candidates will be taken through for an interview process next week. Good luck to all S6 pupils.

5. **Achievement of pupils**: Please continue to tell St Thomas of Aquin's about the achievement of your children outside of school using the following link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 2 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 2nd June:

Please find a Police Scotland attachment which CEC HTs have been asked to send out to all parents on their behalf.

1. **Welcome back to the senior pupils:** We welcome back our senior pupils today; this week S5 and S6 pupils' will be experiencing induction days, retreats, and work experience. Please find attached the provisional S5 and S6 leadership Team remits.

2. **School improvement planning:** There is a planned Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team meeting for School Improvement Plan planning on Tuesday 3rd June: A Draft School Improvement Plan will be developed from 2024-25 The Standard and Quality Report's next steps. I am asking that SLT have 4 priorities in each Quality Indicator area which reflects the voices of pupils, staff, parents, and Local Authority/Scottish Government.

I would like to thank the advice of the Parent Council at last week's meeting, and I will be working on providing all parents 2 versions of the Standards and Quality Report: a detailed version and a summary

version. These 2 documents and the school improvement plan will be shared with the school community in August.

3. **Pupil Parliament Assemblies**: I would like to hold S1-S4 Pupil Parliament Assemblies on Friday 6th June. I will update colleagues and pupils this week.

4. **P7/S1 Transition:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be welcoming 156 P7/S1 pupils to a 3-day visit on Tuesday 17th, Wednesday 18th, and Thursday 19th June. Isabelle will be circulating the 3-day TT shortly.

5. **Staffing:** An advert for a part-time permanent art Teacher is live on Myjobscotland and closes on the 9th June.

6. **Senior awards**: The senior awards ceremony takes place on Wednesday 11th June, and I would like to draw parents of senior pupils' attention to the Eventbrite booking for Senior Awards: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/st-thomas-of-aquins-senior-awards-ceremony-2025-tickets-1338488508159?aff=oddtdtcreator

7. **Achievement of pupils**: Please continue to tell St Thomas of Aquin's about the achievement of your children outside of school using the following link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

8. **School vision and Values survey:** Ms McGowan is supporting a 2024-25 school improvement area in which we are revisiting our school vision and values to analyse and evaluate them for 2025-26 rebrand. The school will be asking for pupils and parents views throughout June.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 26 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 25th May

1. **School improvement planning:**

· Draft Standards and Quality Report completed and shared with Leadership Team week beginning Monday 26th May
· Individual Senior Leadership Team Standards Quality Report /School Improvement Planning meetings on Tuesday 27th May
· Quality Improvement Educational Officer and Headteacher meeting on Thursday 28th May
· Individual Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team meeting for School Improvement Plan planning Tuesday 3rd June
· Senior Leadership Team meeting - School improvement planning Tuesday 10th June

2. **Staffing:** The successful candidate for the Acting Curricular Leader of Technologies (Computing Science and Digital Literacy) is Stuart Gilles and I am working with him and his school for a start

date. The successful candidate for the part-time permanent Maths post is Terry Mackenzie. Congratulations to Eimear Musgrave on her permanent History position at James Gillespies High School.

We will welcome Gemma Banks to her permanent part-time PSL remit on Thursday 29th May.

3. **Parent Council**: The final Parent Council meeting takes place on Tuesday 27th May from 6.30pm. At this meeting we will be saying thank you to the co-chairs of the Parent Council Dr Fiona McQueen and Mrs Eva Silveirinha de Oliveira. It is so important have a positive and collegiate Parent Council and I do hope parents will step forward to work for the greater good of St Thomas of Aquin's.

4. **S6 Leavers Prom:** The S6 Leavers Prom will take place on the Thursday 12th June. The school event will take place at Prestonfield House, and I am asking S6 Leavers parents to support the school by speaking with their adult "children" about the high standards of behaviour and conduct I expect from all attendees. I understand that we will have a mix of S6 Leavers who are under and over the age of 18. I will be restricting the purchase of alcohol at this event, and I am sure S6 Leavers parents will be supporting me with this appropriate and balanced view. I am in correspondence with Prestonfield House regarding this matter.

5. **Senior awards**: The senior awards ceremony takes place on Wednesday 11th June, and I would like to draw parents of senior pupils' attention to the Eventbrite booking for Senior Awards: Please book your 2 places by Friday 30th May. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/st-thomas-of-aquins-senior-awards-ceremony-2025-tickets-1338488508159?aff=oddtdtcreator

6. **Achievement of pupils**: Please continue to tell St Thomas of Aquin's about the achievement of your children outside of school using the following link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

7. **S5 and S6 Leadership positions:** Please find attached the provisional S5 and S6 leadership team remits. Once senior pupils return, we will start the process.

8. **Ascension Thursday:** Mr Wotherspoon will be planning arrangements for Ascension Thursday.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
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FRIDAY 16 MAY

Good afternoon parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

As Monday 19th May is a school holiday, please find the HT briefing a little earlier.

A special thanks to all colleagues involved in ensuring the 2025-26 TT is in place for next week. I have been speaking with pupils and colleagues about the SQA exams being almost all fair papers, fingers crossed for all moving into the last 2 weeks. Thanks to all staff and parents for a very successful and positive S1 parents evening

S2 into S3 Business class formation will be completed next week. The class will be timetabled for an August start.

1. **School improvement planning:** Dates for the next 2 weeks

Draft Standards and Quality Report completed on Friday 23rd May. Shared with Leadership Team
Faculty Plan updates for 2024-25 into Head Teacher on Friday 23rd May
Individual Senior Leadership Team Standards Quality Report /School Improvement Planning meetings on Tuesday 27th May
Quality Improvement Educational Officer and Headteacher meeting on Thursday 28th May
Individual Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team meeting for School Improvement Plan planning Tuesday 3rd June
Senior Leadership Team meeting - School improvement planning Tuesday 10th June

3. Staffing: The Acting Curricular Leader of Technologies (Computing Science and Digital Literacy) interviews will take place on Tuesday 20th May. The part-time permanent Maths post interviews will take place on Thursday 22nd.

4. Parent Council: The final Parent Council meeting takes place on Tuesday 27th May from 6.30pm. At this meeting we will be saying thank you to the co-chairs of the Parent Council Dr Fiona McQueen and Mrs Eva Silveirinha de Oliveira. It is so important have a positive and collegiate Parent Council and I do hope parents will step forward to work for the greater good of St Thomas of Aquin's.

5. **S6 Leavers Prom:** The S6 Leavers Prom will take place on the Thursday 12th June. The school event will take place at Prestonfield House, and I am asking S6 Leavers parents to support the school by speaking with their adult "children" about the high standards of behaviour and conduct I expect from all attendees. I understand that we will have a mix of S6 Leavers who are under and over the age of 18. I will be restricting the purchase of alcohol at this event, and I am sure S6 Leavers parents will be supporting me with this appropriate and balanced view. I am in correspondence with Prestonfield House regarding this matter.

6. **Cashless catering**: As of next week, all pupils must use their pin for their food at break and lunchtime. No cash will be used.

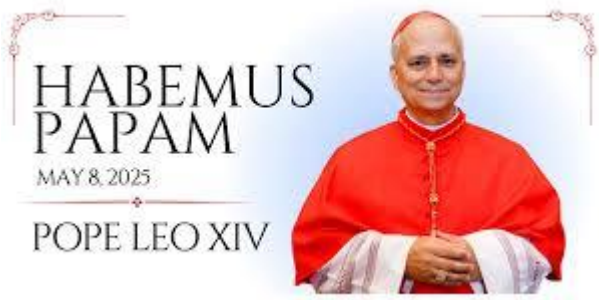
Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 12 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 12th May. Thank you for your patience and support with the reassignment of pupil passwords over the weekend and into this morning. There is a plan in place to support all pupils receiving their new password at the school today.

S1-S3 pupils will receive their passwords during lessons 1 to 3.
S4-S6 pupils can come to reception and receive their passwords from this morning - we are unable to provide passwords over the phone or via a secondary person.



1. **Staffing:** The Acting Curricular Leader of Technologies (Computing Science and Digital Literacy) closed on the 8th May. Interviews for the permanent part-time CL post and Maths post will take place as soon as possible.

2. **Parent Council**: The final Parent Council meeting takes place on Tuesday 27th May from 6.30pm. At this meeting we will be saying thank you to the co-chairs of the Parent Council Dr Fiona McQueen and Mrs Eva Silveirinha de Oliveira. I have really enjoyed working with the co-chair team and they have made a real impact in the life of the school, thanks Fiona and Eva!. I look forward to the new chair/chairs appointed at the AGM on Tuesday 27th May - please consider attending the meeting and taking an active role in the Parent Council.

3. **Brighter Futures** is a supported volunteering and mentoring programme that offers a chance for young people who are struggling to engage with school to explore practical and interpersonal skills in a different setting. Volunteering Matters has delivered Brighter Futures within the school since January 2022, with 73 (S2-S4) pupils supported with volunteering placements. They have also supported over 60 senior pupils with volunteering days with our local charity partners.

Volunteering Matters is trying to diversify income streams and one of the ways to do this is to connect with corporate partners. If the organisation you work for has a vested interest in supporting young people in Edinburgh, please do get in touch. By helping create these links with local businesses, Volunteering Matters can work together to ensure that the pupils of St Thomas Aquins can access the opportunities that they need to thrive. Also please do reach out if you work or volunteer for a charity that could offer a volunteer placement to one our young people.

4. **S1 Parents Evening:** Please find the dates and Faculty opportunities for the forthcoming S1 Parents' evening on **Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th May 2025**. For many of our S1 parents this will be their first Parents Evening at St Thomas of Aquin's. Parents can choose as many teacher slots as possible over the 2 evenings. The S6 Leadership Team will be in the reception area to support you

from 4.45 onwards on both days. Madame Jean Peirre and I will be at both evenings to speak with S1 Parents.

Tuesday 13th May	**Wednesday 14th May**
Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Religious Education	Physical Education
Computing Science	Support for Learning
Performing Arts	
Pupil Support Leaders	
Wellbeing Hub	

6. **Timetable 2025-26:** Pupils move into their new year-groups and new timetable on Tuesday 20th May

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY 28 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

I hope your children enjoyed their first week back at St Thomas of Aquin's and with many of our senior pupils now starting their National Qualifications examinations I wish them all the best during the next 5 weeks. I would like to extend my thanks to the 2024-25 S6 Leadership Team and to the S6 pupils for a lovely Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 23rd April. I will be writing to S6 parents regarding the standards and expectations for the S6 prom at Prestonfield House on Thursday 12th June which I am looking forward to.

1. **Staffing:** An advert for a permanent part-time Maths Teacher post went live on Myjobscotland on Thursday 24th April and closes on Thursday 1st May. Ms Stalker will be going on maternity leave from August 2025 and an Acting Curricular Leader of Technologies (Computing Science and Digital Literacy) advert went live on myjobscotland on Friday 25th April.

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's MS Forms Survey:** Please find the completed 2025 parent survey analysis on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-2025-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf

There is some great evidence for our continued improvements at St Thomas of Aquin's along with areas to improve on from a parent perspective. I am working on the pupil survey analysis this week and I will hopefully have this document completed for you next Tuesday (6th May). The staff survey will go live in early May after the Inservice Day.

3. **S1-S3 Tracking** closes on Friday 2nd May.

4. **Recognising Pupil Achievement:** Parents can now support the school in celebrating their children's achievement (inside and outside of the school) by using this MS Forms link – thank you to Mrs Hastings for this: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

5. **S1 Parents Evening:** Please find the dates and Faculty opportunities for the forthcoming S1 Parents' evening on **Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th May 2025**. For many of our S1 parents this will be their first Parents Evening at St Thomas of Aquin's. Parents can choose as many teacher slots as possible over the 2 evenings. The S6 Leadership Team will be in the reception area to support you from 4.45 onwards on both days. Madame Jean Pierre and I will be at both evenings to speak with S1 parents. An email will be sent to all S1 parents this week with all the information on how to log on and book appointments for the parents evening.

Tuesday 13th May	**Wednesday 14th May**
Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Religious Education	Physical Education
Computing Science	Support for Learning
Performing Arts	
Pupil Support Leaders	
Wellbeing Hub	

6. **2025-26 School improvement planning, action, and themes:** I have attached a 2025-26 school improvement planning process overview document which I shared with the Parent Council last week. I will continue to update the school community with improvement themes throughout April and May.

   School Improvement themes so far:

- Lay Chaplain introduction – Archdiocese voice
- Faculty attainment: NPAs – CEC voice
- Fieldtrips and excursions vision and planning – Parent and pupil voice
- Equity in Practical subjects timetabling – Staff voice
- Gold RSS – pupil voice
- Senior Phase assessment timeline/BGE Homestudy - Parent voice
- Medical room planning, Healthcare Plan communications; and whole school CLPL on asthma and EpiPen – Inspection voice
- School website – SLT voice
- AI policy and procedures – CEC voice
- Water Fountains – Pupil Parliament voice
- Pupil Tracking whole school and Faculty analysis

7. **St Thomas of Aquin's Award Ceremonies June 2025:** Thank you to Mrs Hastings who has started the planning for the S1-S3 School Assembly Awards Ceremonies and for the Senior Awards Ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 11th June.

Regards
Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

MONDAY 31 MARCH

Good morning St Thomas of Aquin's Parents

Please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 31st March. A big thank you to all pupils and staff and especially to all of the PE team for their organisation of the 2025 Fun Run. The school had a great day on Friday 28th March.

St Thomas of Aquin's will close for the Easter holidays on Friday 4th April at the normal time of 1.10 and we look forward to having all of our pupils returning, in full school uniform, on Tuesday 22nd April

1. **St Thomas of Aquin's Pupil MS Forms Survey:** The St Thomas of Aquin's MS Forms Pupil survey has 332 responses so far. All pupils have been emailed and will be supported through Key Adult, PSE, and Assemblies to complete the survey. The survey closes on Friday 4th April.

I will collate the 2025 Parent Survey responses and have an updated evaluation document ready to send out to all parents on our return to school after the Easter Holidays. Your views will continue to shape the improvement of the school, and I will signpost this in our school improvement tmeses and plan.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking** starts on Monday 31st March and closes on 2nd May.

3. **Recognising Pupil Achievement:** Parents can now support the school in celebrating their children's achievement (inside and outside of the school) by using this MS Forms link – thank you to Mrs Hastings for this: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xIBXivIKRVxHo5TFXIpfkIhURVFUUjZOMUVRTkUzVU9VODlLSTJSMDNSWi4u

4. **Business Education plan:** I met with S3, S4, and S5 pupils on Monday 24th and Wednesday 26th March to discuss the school's Business Education plan for session 2025-26. I have emailed individual parents regarding the choices and placed the Business Education presentation on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/ . Can parents please speak with their children and return the slip, if they wish to go ahead with Business Education in session 2025-26, to Ms Stalker by Friday 4th April.

- 1 x Higher/National 5 S5 and S6 Business Education class
- 1 x S4 National 5 Business Education class and 1 x S4 NPA Business aligned class
- 1 x S3 CfE Level 3 and 4 Business Education class

5. **Parent Council Ceilidh – Thursday 3rd April**: Please come and attend the Parent Council planned Ceilidh on Thursday 3rd April – please take time to read the attached poster.

Parent Council meeting (in person): The next Parent Council will take place on 24th April from 6.30-8.30 at St Thomas of Aquin's Modern Language Faculty room 3.33.

6. **Staffing update:**. Congratulations to Clare Landsburgh who is the successful candidate for the part-time Curricular Leader of Modern Languages. I am looking forward to Mrs Landsburgh starting at St Thomas of Aquin's by 1st June.

Longleet interview for the permanent part-time Pupil Support Leaders post will take place on Monday 31st March.

7. **2025-26 School Improvement planning, action, and themes:** Please find school improvement themes which the Senior Leadership Team will consider for the 2025-26 school improvement plan. I will update the school community with improvement themes throughout April and May.

   School Improvement themes so far:

- Faculty attainment: NPAs – CEC voice
- Fieldtrips and excursions vision and planning – Parent and pupil voice
- Equity in Practical subjects timetabling – Staff voice
- Gold RSS – pupil voice
- Senior Phase assessment timeline/BGE Homestudy - Parent voice
- Medical room planning, Healthcare Plan communications; and whole school CLPL on asthma and EpiPen – Inspection voice
- School website – SLT voice
- AI policy and procedures – CEC voice
- Water Fountains – Pupil Parliament voice

8. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science).

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils will be Wednesday 23rd April. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan Assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 23rd April. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from 9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents' participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2024-25 S6 year group.

9. **St Thomas of Aquin's Award Ceremonies June 2025:** Thank you to Mrs Hastings who has started the planning for the S1-S3 school Assembly awards ceremonies and for the Senior Awards Ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 11th of June.

10. **Preparing your child for exams:** online information evening on **Wednesday 2 April from 5pm until 6pm.** There will be presentations from Ms Brisley, Support for Learning teacher, Mrs Nicholson, Curricular Leader, and Joe Douglas, our school councillor. Preparing your child for exams

11. **The Student Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS)** provides assessment, funding and support to full-time and part-time Scottish students in higher education including tuition fees, student loans, bursaries and supplementary grants. SAAS will be hosting an online funding talk on **Thursday, 3 April at 6pm** for pupils and Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's.

- Please find below the meeting link below:
- **Join the meeting now**
- Meeting ID: 367 003 969 78
- Passcode: XW3eq3Fz

Regards
Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 24 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 24th March

Congratulations to Ms Patrick, Mrs Kennedy, our Music instructors, and all our pupils for an excellent Spring Concert last Thursday! Another fantastic evening of music – well done to all

8. **Fun Run 2025: Friday 28th March: Pupils can come to school with their 80stastic clothing on – be sure it is appropriate to wear, or I can support with uniform.**

10.45: All pupils should report to their period 3 class as normal, where they can leave their belongings and register.
Pupils who are not participating for a valid reason (medical note from parents/ carers etc.) should report to Mr Lodge in the dining hall, after they have been registered - these pupils will be doing independent study.

11.25 - Announcements will be made to invite the various year groups to make their way via the main exit to the meadows.

- **11.25: S5-S6**
- **11.30: S3-S4**
- **11.35: S1-S2**

Period 3 teaches should escort their class to the meadows then proceed to the designated area.

9. **St Thomas of Aquin's Pupil MS Forms Survey:** The St Thomas of Aquin's MS Forms Pupil survey is now live (we have 187 responses so far). All pupils have been emailed and will be supported through Key Adult, PSE, and Assemblies to complete the survey. The survey closes on Friday 4th April.

St Thomas of Aquin's Parent MS Forms survey: Thank you to the 137 parents who have already completed the following survey – the survey closes this week – can we get to over 150!: https://forms.office.com/e/sq6xZhTqAg .

10. **Business Education plan:** For session 2025-26 I am planning on a Business Education TT to support the following:

- 1 x Higher/National 5 S5 and S6 Business Education class
- 1 x S4 National 5 Business Education class and 1 x S4 NPA Business aligned class
- 1 x S3 CfE Level 3 and 4 Business Education class

I will be meeting with interested pupils on Wednesday 26th March to discuss what this will look like – I will tannoy interested pupils on Monday 24th March for an initial meeting. The school is still on track to have a Business Education Teacher in place for August 2025.

11. **Parent Council Ceilidh – Thursday 3rd April**: Please come and attend the Parent Council planned Ceilidh on Thursday 3rd April – please take time to read the attached poster.

12. **Staffing update:**. Longleet interviews for the permanent part-time Curricular Leader of Modern Languages took place on Thursday 20th March and the shortleet interviews will take place on Thursday 27th March.

Longleet interview for the permanent part-time Pupil Support Leaders post will take place on Monday 31st March.

13. **2025-26 School Improvement planning, action, and themes:** The parent survey along with the pupils and staff surveys (which will be going live in late March and early May) will support your voices being heard in the 2025-26 school improvement plan. I will update the school community with improvement themes throughout April and May.

School Improvement themes so far:

- Faculty attainment: NPAs – CEC voice
- Fieldtrips and excursions vision and planning – Parent and pupil voice
- Equity in Practical subjects timetabling – Staff voice
- Gold RSS – pupil voice
- Senior Phase assessment timeline/BGE Homestudy - Parent voice

- Medical room planning, Healthcare Plan communications; and whole school CLPL on asthma and EpiPen – Inspection voice
- School website – SLT voice

14. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science).

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils will be Wednesday 23rd April. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 23rd April. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from 9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2024-25 S6 year group.

15. **St Thomas of Aquin's Award Ceremonies June 2025:** Thank you to Mrs Hastings who has started the planning for the S1-S3 school assembly Awards Ceremonies and for the Senior Awards Ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 11th June.

Regards
Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

MONDAY 17 MARCH

Good morning Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 17h March – Its St Patricks Day and all pupils in St Patrick's House will be experiencing a House Assembly.

From Wednesday 19th March, I will be supporting all pupils wearing full school uniform to St Thomas of Aquin's: Black shoes, black school trousers or skirts, white shirts, St Thomas school ties; and a black (non-branded jumper – unless it is St Thomas of Aquin's badged jumper). Please can parents continue to support our school-uniform wearing.

1. **St Thomas of Aquin's Parent MS Forms survey**: Thank you to the 104 parents who have already completed the following survey – I am hoping we get even more parents completing the survey this week: https://forms.office.com/e/sq6xZhTqAg .

The last 2 years of survey analysis can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2024-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf.
The February School Improvement Plan updates can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nov-Updates-2024-25-School-Improvement-Plan.pdf which includes a specific page on how we are listening to the voices of pupils, parents, and staff and placing your views into school improvement planning.
The link to the lunchtime and after school clubs cab be found here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime_and-after_school_clubs/sports-clubs/. The Parent MS Teams survey closes at the end of March, I am hoping that we can increase the returns from last year's 176 total.

2. **Parent Council Ceilidh – Thursday 3rd April**: Please come and attend the Parent Council planned Ceilidh on Thursday 3rd April – please take time to read the attached poster.

3. **Staffing update:**. Interviews for a permanent Physics Teacher took place last week and I have contacted CEC with the name of our preferred candidate. Interviews for a permanent part-time post in Maths will now take place week beginning Monday 17th March.

Longleet interviews for the permanent part-time Curricular Leader of Modern Languages post will take place on Thursday 20th and Longleet interview for the permanent part-time Pupil Support Leaders post will take place on Monday 31st March.

4. **2025-26 School Improvement planning, action, and themes:** Last week I invited 10 City of Edinburgh Secondary Depute Headteachers to St Thomas of Aquin's to help us self-evaluate our Quality Indicator 3.1 (Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion). Madame Jean-Pierre, who strategically led the 2-day self-evaluation, was very pleased with the initial feedback. Madame Jean-Pierre will update the Parent Council with her analysis, and this will also help with our school improvement agenda.

The Parent survey along with the pupils and staff surveys (which will be going live in late March and early May) will also support your voices being heard in the 2025-26 school improvement plan. I will update the school community with improvement themes throughout April and May.

5. **Supporting S4-S6 pupils SQA exams**: Thank you to Ms Mariani who has planned for all S4, S5 and S6 pupils to participate in a exam preparation workshop with Live n Learn between 1 and 2 April. Live n Learn will be in over the 2 days and pupils will take part in 1 workshop only over the 2 days which will run over 2-3 periods.
6. **Congratulations** to Farah Joma (S4) who won her Artivism category at the Saroj Lal Awards (held at Edinburgh City Chambers) last week. .

7. **Spring Concert Thursday March 20th 7-9pm:** Come and enjoy a superb night of music! whether you have a child performing or not, come and enjoy an exceptional evening of music in the main hall. Tickets can be bought on the door.

8. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science).

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils will be Wednesday 23rd April. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 23rd April. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from 9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2024-25 S6 year group.

Regards
Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY 10 MARCH

Good morning St Thomas of Aquin's parents, please find the HT briefing for Monday 10th March; **thank you all very much for supporting World Book Day – the S6 Leadership Team and the school raised £400 for Teenage cancer Trust**

To support S4, S5 and S6 parents with helping their children at home, please look at the following SQA parent link to help with the SQA exams: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41312.html

1. **Lent**: Please take time to watch and listen to His Grace's Message for Lent 2024 - Archbishop Cushley

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Parent MS Forms survey**: Thank you to the 70 parents who have already completed the following survey – I am hoping we get even more parents completing the survey this week: https://forms.office.com/e/sq6xZhTqAg .

The last 2 years of survey analysis can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2024-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf.
The February School Improvement Plan updates can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nov-Updates-2024-25-School-Improvement-Plan.pdf which includes a specific page on how we are listening to the voices of pupils, parents, and staff and placing your views into school improvement planning.
The link to the lunchtime and after school clubs can be found here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime_and-after_school_clubs/sports-clubs/. The parent MS Teams survey closes at the end of March, I am hoping that we can increase the returns from last year's 176 total..

3. **Staffing update:**. St Thomas of Aquin's had a visit from the preferred Business Education Teacher colleague on Tuesday 4th March and we are one step forward for an August reintroduction for Business Education. I do think it appropriate to have an initial planning meeting with Ms Stalker regarding how we support S4, S5 and S6 pupils who are interested in Business Education. I will update you with our thoughts and plan during the next month.

Permanent part-time positions for a Curricular Leader of Modern Languages and a Pupil Support Leaders posts are advertised with closing dates today – Monday 10th March.

Interviews for a permanent Physics Teacher took place on last week and I will be working with Mr Green to identify the preferred candidate this week. Interviews for a permanent part-time post in Maths will take place on Thursday 13th March

4. **Spring Concert Thursday March 20th 7-9pm:** Come and enjoy a superb night of music! Whether you have a child performing or not, come and enjoy an exceptional evening of music in the main hall. Tickets can be bought on the door.

5. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science).

The last day of school for all S4-S6 pupils will be Wednesday 23rd April. The Pupil Support Leaders and Ms Mariani will plan assemblies for S4 and S5 year groups on Wednesday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.
S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on Wednesday 23rd April. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from 9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building. Unfortunately, in the past I have had to

discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2024-25 S6 year group.

Regards
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St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY

Good morning St Thomas of Aquin's parents, please find the HT briefing for Friday 28th February

Please take time to complete the annual **St Thomas of Aquin's Parent MS Forms survey**: https://forms.office.com/e/sq6xZhTqAg . The last 2 years of survey analysis can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2024-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf

1. **Thursday 6th March - World Book Day**: The whole school are invited to dress up as book characters on Thursday 6th March to support the S6 Leadership Team's charity Teenage Cancer Trust.

World Book day Assemblies: Monday 3rd of March Lesson 5: There will be no Tannoy due to Modern Language Listening exams: could the following Colleagues bring down pupils at the below times:
12.25: Science, Music, and Art Colleagues please bring **S1 pupils** to the mainhall
12.35: Modern Language Cover staff and Geography Teachers please bring **S2 pupils** to the mainhall
12.50: Social Subjects, Science, and Art/Technology Teachers please bring **S3 pupils** to the mainhall.

2. **Lent:** There will be Lent Assemblies on **Wednesday 5th March – Ash Wednesday.** Chris will be emailing out times as soon as possible.

3. **School Improvement plan update**: The February School Improvement Plan updates can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nov-Updates-2024-25-School-Improvement-Plan.pdf

4. **Staffing update:**. Permanent part-time positions for a Curricular Leader of Modern Languages and a Pupil Support Leaders posts are advertised with closing dates on March 10th. Interviews for a permanent Physics Teacher will take place on Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th March.

5. **Spring Concert Thursday March 20th 7-9pm:** Come and enjoy a superb night of music! whether you have a child performing or not, come and enjoy an exceptional evening of music in the main hall. Tickets can be bought on the door.

6. **Friday 28th March 2025 Fun Run:** Every 2 years St Thomas of Aquin's school community celebrates the wonderful lives of Cameron and Ellie Armstrong who sadly passed away in 2015. Our school fun run celebrates their lives whilst also supporting a fund for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils who excel in regional and National sport. I have attached the ECAIM application form which will be beneficial for parents to read and use to ask for funding. I have also inserted the QR code bellow for parents/pupils to support donations!
This year's theme is the 80s.I can wait to get my planned outfit on…Lets have a great end of term Funrun in which the whole school participates.

7. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** The senior leadership team will be confirming the final day for S4-S5 pupils prior to the start of the 2025 SQA exams. Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and I believe the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science). I am looking at Wednesday 23rd April as a possible last day for S4, S5, and S6 pupils.

8. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**: With S2 into S3, and S3 into S4 coursing completed and placed in our Seemis computing system, the school is focusing on finalising S4 into S5 and S5 into S6 coursing over the next 2 weeks.

9. **A useful Parent support App:** Apps to support wellbeing for parents and carers – The City of Edinburgh Council

Regards
Christopher Santini
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Success

MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Welcome back to a busy term at St Thomas of Aquin's. Thank you to all colleagues and parents for a very productive S5-6 parents evening on Thursday 20th February. We tried a draft plan of placing all teachers in the main hall and we will be moving forward with this for all S4 and S5/6 parents evenings. We will ensure a seating plan is available for parents who will be attending the S4 parents evening on Tuesday 4th March.

1. **Staffing update:** A matching exercise has taken place for St Thomas of Aquin's and Business Teacher applicants, and we are awaiting confirmation of a positive acceptance. Permanent part-time positions for a Curricular Leader of Modern Languages and a Pupil Support Leaders post will be advertised shortly.

2. **School Improvement plan update:** The senior leadership team will be updating the School Improvement Plan during February. The update will be shared with school community via the school website and HT briefing.

3. **Thursday 6th March - World Book Day**: The whole school are invited to dress up as book characters on Thursday 6th March to support the S6 Leadership Team's charity Teenage Cancer Trust – please consider donating what you can. Teenage Cancer trust is an important charity for the school this year. Let's get our fancy-dress book characters planned! My children have planned my outfit… 😊

4. **Spring Concert Thursday March 20th 7-9pm:** Come and enjoy a superb night of music! Whether you have a child performing or not, come and enjoy an exceptional evening of music in the main hall. Tickets can be bought on the door.

5. **Friday 28th March 2025 Fun Run:** Every 2 years St Thomas of Aquin's school community celebrates the wonderful lives of Cameron and Ellie Armstrong who sadly passed away in 2015. Our

school fun run celebrates their lives whilst also supporting a fund for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils who excel in regional and National sport. I have attached the ECAIM application form which will be beneficial for parents to read and use to ask for funding. I have attached the QR code for parents/pupils to support donations!

This year's theme is the 80s.I can wait to get my planned outfit on…Lets have a great end of term Funrun in which the whole school participates.

6. **S4-S6 Pupil Tracking at St Thomas of Aquin's**: S4 tracking will be completed by Friday 28th February and sent to parents in the 2nd week of March.

7. **S4-S6 SQA examinations:** The senior leadership team will be meeting next week to discuss the final day for S4-S5 pupils prior to the start of the 2025 SQA exams. Pupils return from Easter holidays on Tuesday 22nd April and I believe the first SQA exam for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils is on Friday 25th April (Computer Science). I will be back in touch with a confirmed last day for senior pupils as well as expectations for S6 pupils.

8. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**: With S2 into S3, and S3 into S4 coursing completed and placed in our Seemis computing system, the school is focusing on finalising S4 into S5 and S5 into S6 coursing over the next 2 weeks. Thank you to all colleagues supporting the coursing calendar and to pupils and parents for working with the school's timelines.

Regards
Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parent briefing for Friday 7th February, I do hope you all enjoy a relaxing February break. Please remember that on our return we have S5-S6 Parents Evening on Thursday 20th February

1. **Staffing:** I will keep the school community up to date with teaching vacancies throughout February and March.

2. **S4-S6 Pupil Tracking at St Thomas of Aquin's**: S5 and S6 tracking to be **completed by Friday 7th February.** S4 tracking to be **completed by Friday 28th February.**

3. **English Final Draft Folio deadline.**

The deadline for the final draft of the Nat 5 folio is the 28th February. The deadline for the Higher folio is the 14th March. All folios need to be completed on the SQA template which can be found here in the Course Work section. The template is the same for both Higher and National 5:
https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47904.html

4. **Main toilets**: From **February 3rd through to week beginning Monday 31st March** the main girls' and boys' toilets will be open during Lesson 4. I would like to thank the Pupil Parliament's support and planning for this proposal.

5. **Spring Concert: Thursday 20th March 7-9pm**

6. **PE Lockers:** Can parents please speak with their children regarding the use of the bespoke PE Lockers – a great way to support valuables being as safe as possible – please see attachment.

7. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**:

All S4 into S5 coursing will be completed by Friday 21st February.

Please find information about 2025 coursing on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

The 2025 February break starts on Monday 10th February. All pupils and staff return to St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday 17th February.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 3rd February

Thank you to parents for their support with many St Thomas of Aquin's pupils wearing school uniform. Please can I ask all parents to support pupils wearing full school uniform every day: black shoes, black trouser/skirts, white shirt, school tie, non-labelled V-neck or round neck black jumper or St Thomas of Aquin's V-neck black jumper or hoodie.

I am very grateful for your support with uniform.

1. **Staffing:** Business Education interviews have been completed, and St Thomas of Aquin's has identified and communicated preferred candidates to the staffing panel. I will keep the school community up to date with this post and other staffing vacancies throughout February and March.

2. **S4-S6 Pupil Tracking at St Thomas of Aquin's**: S5 and S6 tracking to be **completed by Friday 7th February.** S4 tracking to be **completed by Friday 28th February.**

3. **Main toilets**: From **February 3rd through to week beginning Monday 31st March** the main girls and boys' toilets will be open during Lesson 4. I would like to thank the Pupil Parliament's support and planning for this proposal.

5. **Music recital 5th February Poster attached**: Please come and enjoy a music recital at St Thomas of Aquin's on Wednesday 5th February

6. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**:

S3 pupils Personalisation and Choice 2-week window started on Monday 20th January – Madame Jean-Pierre has emailed parents the MS Forms link
S4 and S5 Personalisation and Choice 2-week window starts on Monday 3rd February – Ms Mariani will email parents with the MS Forms link

Please find information about 2025 coursing on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

5. **Parent Council meeting – Tuesday 4th February**: The next Parent Council meeting takes place via MS Teams on Tuesday 4th February from 6.30

The 2025 February break starts on Monday 10th February. All pupils and staff return to St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday 17th February.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 27 JANUARY

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

I do hope you all had as safe a Friday 24th as possible and the digital learning experience went as well as possible. Please find the HT briefing for Monday 27th January

1. **Staffing:** An advert for a Business Education Teacher closed on Tuesday 21st January. Ms Stalker, Ms Mariani, and I have offered 8 candidates an interview on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th January.

2. **Pupil Tracking at St Thomas of Aquin's**: S1-S3 tracking reports should be with parents by Wednesday 29th January. The S4-S6 Tracking window starts on Monday 27th January and will be completed by teachers by Friday 7th February

3. **St Thomas of Aquin's Feast Day:**

8.00am	Mass in the Sacred Heart Church (voluntary for all pupils and staff)
Key Adult	Prayer and Video • Mr Wotherspoon will send to all KA teachers
Period 1	Assembly for S1 & S2 (Hall) 9.00-9.30am
Period 2	Assembly for S3 & S4 (Hall) 9.45-10.15am
Period 3	Assembly for S5 & S6 (Hall) 10.55-11.25am

Assembly Structure

- Hymn (Christ Be Our Light)
- Liturgy of the Word (Readings, with short reflection by Mr Wotherspoon)
- Prayer
- Hymn (School Hymn)
- Pupils will be given a treat and prayer card

4. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**:

S2 pupils will have completed their Personalisation and Choice 2-week window by Friday 24th January.
S3 pupils Personalisation and Choice 2-week window started on Monday 20th January – Madame Jean-Pierre has emailed parents the MS Forms link
S4 and S5 Personalisation and Choice 2-week window starts on Monday 3rd February – Ms Mariani will email parents with the MS Forms link

Please find information about 2025 coursing on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

5. **Friday 31st January**:

St Thomas of Aquin's will welcome 40 P7 parents on Friday 31st January from 11.30 onwards to support the 2025-26 P7 transition experience. S6 pupils will support touring the P7 parents around the school and Isabelle and I will meet them in the PE classroom from 12.45 onwards for an Q&A session.

6. **Draft Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Equality policy**: I will be closing the window for emailing me and Isabelle with thoughts and amendments to the draft Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Equality policy on 31st January. Please contact Isabelle or I with final thought next week.

7. **Parent Council meeting – Tuesday 4th February**: The next Parent Council meeting takes place via MS Teams on Tuesday 4th February from 6.30pm

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 20 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 20th January

December Christmas Jumper and last day of term contributions: A huge thanks to the St Thomas of Aquin's School Community for supporting £300 donation to Teenage Cancer Trust and £300 for The sister of Mercy. I will ensure cheques are sent to be organisations as soon as possible.

8. **Staffing:** An advert for a Business Education Teacher is live on Myjobscotland and closes on Tuesday 21st January. An entire school fingers crossed for this post… 😊

9. **St Thomas of Aquin's Feast Day:** Mr Wotherspoon and I met with Fr Adrian Porter to plan for **Tuesday 28th January – The Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquin's**. We are planning on supporting as many S1-S6 pupils as possible attending Mass/Services at The Sacred Heart and for The S6 Caritas Team to provide a whole school "treat".

10. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**: The S2-S5 personalisation and course choice sheets have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/. S2 pupils will complete their Personalisation and Choice 2-week window by Friday 24th January

S3 pupils Personalisation and Choice 2-week window starts from Monday 20th January – Madame Jean-Pierre will be emailing parents on Monday 20th January with the MS Forms link

11. **S1-S3 Tracking**: Teachers have completed S1-S3 Tracking reports (Friday 17th January) and we hope to get these reports to pupils and parents by the end of January/early February.

12. **Friday 24th and Friday 31st January**:

St Thomas of Aquin's will welcome Elected members to the school on Friday 24th from 9.30 to experience our inclusive pupil education which will involve meeting with myself and touring around the school.
St Thomas of Aquin's will welcome 40 P7 parents on Friday 31st January from 11.30 onwards to support the 2025-26 P7 transition experience. S6 pupils will support touring the P7 parents around the school and Isabelle and I will meet thme in the PE classroom from 12.45 onwards for an Q&A session.

13. **Parent Council**: **Ceilidh 2025 - Come and join us!** is taking place on **Friday, 24th January 2025**, from **7:00 PM to 9:30 PM** at the school. The Ceilidh is our only fundraising event this year, and we would greatly appreciate your support in attending. The event will have live music and a caller (who will guide everyone through the dances). There will be non-alcoholic drinks and snacks available for purchase. The event is open to everyone—adults, children, friends, and family—so please feel free to invite others to join us! Tickets: £5 per person and 25% discount for purchases of four or more tickets

Purchase tickets here:
https://app.goodhub.com/sttamsceilidh2025

If anyone would like to attend but faces financial difficulties, please email us. We will arrange free tickets for your family. Last year, we had over 100 attendees and a fantastic time. Let's make this year even better! 😊
Eva and Fiona (co-chairs)

14. **Parent Council meeting – Tuesday 4th February**: The next Parent Council meeting takes place via MS Teams on Tuesday 4th February from 6.30pm

Regards
Christopher

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MONDAY 13 JANUARY

Good morning, please find the HT briefing for Monday 13th January, all the best to S4, S5, and S6 pupils undertaking their prelim exams in next week…In bocca al lupo: 😊.

1. **Staffing:** I have completed a December 2024 staffing return to CEC and will report back on a regular basis regarding vacancies and adverts.

2. **Draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy**: Please find the draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Draft-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Wellbeing-Equality-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf.

3. **2025 Personalisation and Choice coursing**: The S2-S5 personalisation and course choice sheets have been placed on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/ . S2 pupils will complete their personalisation and choice 2-week window on Monday 13th January.

4. **S1-S3 Tracking**: Teachers will be completing S1-S3 tracking reports over the next 2 weeks and we hope to get these reports to pupils and parents by the end of January/early February.

5. **Parent Council:** The Parent Council are organising a social event at the end of January, the evening of Friday 24th January. Details to come. I do hope as many parents will attend the parent-led experience.

6. **Pupil Parliament December and January meetings:** I met with the Pupil Parliament in December and again in January regarding several areas and of particular interest was the discussion regarding our accessible toilets/main boys' and girls' toilets. I will be meeting with a CEC Health and Safety colleague regarding our accessible toilets on Tuesday 14th January and I have invited pupils to be part of this discussion. I will be returning to the Pupil Parliament in late January to discuss a temporary plan that pupils have come up with - opening the main toilets during lesson 4 – and I will feedback to the school community as soon as possible.

7. **Draft remote Learning plan in case of winter school closures:** There seems to be little prospect at the moment of the weather having a significant impact on school based learning in January. However, it is always good to future proof. Please read what our draft plans could look like:

   A blend of live online and asynchronous digital learning

   - The pupils and staff will follow their Lesson 1-7 timetabled classes for the identified days using iPads and MS Teams.
   - To support pupils with an online health and wellbeing check we will share the MS Teams function of reflections with pupils which allows them to share with PSLs how they are feeling. Pupils can use reflections at any time of the day.
   - Using our iPads, MS Teams knowledge, and empowered learning expertise, all lessons will have a live 10-minute starter and presentation of learning, independent piece of pupil learning for 25 minutes (the asynchronous part), and a 15-minute Q/A session + plenary.
   - The Learning, Development, and Support Faculty to check in with identified pupils.
   - If a staff member is absent on any of the identified planned days, then the Curricular Leader of the Faculty will contact the class with cover work.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 6 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, I hope this email finds you and your families well and that you enjoyed the Christmas holidays. Please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 6th January.

1. **Thank you**: On Wednesday 18th December St Thomas of Aquin's staff received gifts from the St Thomas of Aquin's parent community. On behalf of all colleagues, I would like to extend our thanks to parents who contributed with such generosity. Our gifts were gratefully received. A special thanks to the Parent Council for organising this.

2. **Draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy**: Please find the draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Draft-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Wellbeing-Equality-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf.

3. **2025 Prelims:** All the best to all S4, S5, and S6 pupils undertaking their prelim exams in January…In bocca al lupo:😊

4. **2025 Course Choice update**: I will be finalising the S2-S5 course choice sheets this week, and I will send them to all parents shortly. I will also ensure that the sheets are on the school website. Completion of the course choices will be completed via MS Teams - please watch out for emails from the Depute Heads.

5. **S1-S3 Tracking**: Teachers will be completing S1-S3 tracking reports over the next 2 weeks and we hope to get these reports to pupils and parents by the end of January/early February.

6. **Parent Council:** The Parent Council are organising a social event at the end of January, the evening of Friday 24th January. Details to come. I do hope as many parents will attend the parent-led experience.

7. **Jackie Reid letter:** Please find attached a letter from CEC's new Chief Education Officer.

I wish you all the very best for 2025 and I am looking forward to leading St Thomas of Aquin's for another successful year.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 16 DECEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the last HT briefing for 2024.

On Friday 13th December, I welcomed over 30 P7 parents and pupils to visit St Thomas of Aquin's. I will be offering another visit to P7 parents and pupils on Friday 31st January 2025. This new transition plan will help associated and non-associated primary parents and pupils decide if St Thomas of Aquin's is the best school to attend in Edinburgh.

1. **Draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy**: Please find the draft Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion policy on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Draft-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Wellbeing-Equality-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf.

2. **Advent Prayers**: Thank you to Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Luncanu, and our talented pupils and staff who have delivered Advent Prayers, via the Tannoy, throughout the last 2 weeks. We have experienced and enjoyed prayers in English, Portuguese, Italian, Bulgarian, Greek, Irish, Ukrainian, and Spanish so far.

3. **St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas concert**: a huge thanks to Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, our visiting Instrumental Teachers, staff, Parent Council members, and most importantly to our talented pupils for a great Christmas Concert.

4. **Christmas meal in the canteen and staffroom:** On Wednesday 18th December, our excellent canteen colleagues will be serving pupils their Christmas lunch.

5. **The last day of school – Friday 20th December:** School will close from 1.10pm on Friday 20th December with S4, S5 and S6 assemblies taking place at 12.00 noon and S1, S2, and S3 assemblies taking place at 12.30pm. The last day will be a non-uniform day and I am asking all pupils to bring a small donation of money for The Sisters of Mercy to support their work with vulnerable people over the Christmas period.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful Christmas

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 9 DECEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 9th December

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Gemma Perry on being the successful candidate for the Modern Studies and Politics teacher post.

2. **Pupil Assemblies: December Personalisation and Choice**: I will be meeting with S3 and S5 pupils for coursing assemblies - please find attached an updated assembly presentation. The assemblies take place on Tuesday 10th December.

3. **P7 Associated Primary School Parents invite to experience St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School:** This Friday we have over 25 P7 Associated Parents visiting St Thomas of Aquin's from 11.30am-1.00pm to experience our school at work. Parents will congregate on the mezzanine and then I will go through a short presentation in the mainhall. The S6 Leadership Team will support our visitors with a tour of the school and then return them to the staffroom for a Q&A session for 20 minutes. A further date of Friday 31st January is also in the diary, and we already have over 15 parents visiting on this day for the same experience.

4. **St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas concert**: We are holding our annual Christmas Concert in Central Hall, Tollcross on Thursday 12th December from 7:00pm to 9:30pm. Last year proved to be such an enjoyable experience for pupils, parents and staff

- **Ticket Prices**
- Adult - £8.00
- Concession - £4.00
- Family Ticket (2 adults + 3 children) - £20.00

Refreshments will be available to purchase on the night. Please come along and enjoy the Christmas festivities along with some amazing entertainment from our very talented musicians.

5. **Christmas Jumper Day - Monday 16th December**: The S6 Leadership Team are raising money for Teenage Cancer Trust and on **Monday 16th of December** all pupils can wear a Christmas jumper to school over their full school uniform. Please bring a small donation to raise money for such an important charity.

6. **Christmas meal in the canteen and staffroom:** On Wednesday 18th December, our excellent canteen colleagues will be serving pupils their Christmas lunch.

7. **The last day of school – Friday 20th December:** School will close from 1.10pm on Friday 20th December with an S4, S5, and S6 assembly taking place at 12.00 noon and an S1, S2, and S3 assembly taking place at 12.30pm. The last day will be a non-uniform day and I am asking all pupils to bring a small donation of money for The Sisters of Mercy to support their work with vulnerable people over the Christmas period.

MONDAY 2 DECEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 2nd December

I am asking all St Thomas of Aquin's parents to support their children wearing full school uniform: a white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black shoes, a black V-neck/crew neck jumper (non-logo) or a St Thomas of Aquin's school logo hoodie. Thank you very much for your continued support.

8. **Staffing**: Unfortunately, both candidates withdrew from the Business and Computing teacher interviews last week – this is a disappointment for the school community. I will be discussing next steps at Senior Leadership Team meetings throughout December.

Interviews for a Modern Studies and Politics teacher will take place today, Monday 2nd December.

2. **School improvement plan update**: Please find the November school improvement plan update link to the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nov-Updates-2024-25-School-Improvement-Plan.pdf

3. **Pupil Assemblies: December Personalisation and Choice**: I will be meeting with S2, S3,and S4 pupils for coursing assemblies - please find attached a draft assembly presentation. The first 2 assemblies will take place on Tuesday 3rd December

4. **P7 Associated Primary School Parents invite to experience St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School:** Up to 60 P7 associated parents are invited to visit St Thomas of Aquin's on **Friday 13th December from 11.30-1.00pm** to experience our school at work. This would involve meeting the HT and SLT in the main hall for a 20-minute introduction, a tour of the school by S2 and/or S3 pupils (in groups of 10 parents), and then returning to the staffroom for a Q&A session for 20 minutes. A further date of the 31st January is also an option for up to 60 P7 Associated Parents.

If you are an interested parent please email St Thomas of Aquin's Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk and please give the following information

- Name of parent:
- Name of pupil and Primary school:
- Date of visit:

We can offer 1 place for each associated primary pupil parent

4. **Parent Council meeting:** The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th December. This is an MS Teams meeting –

- **Join the meeting now**
- Meeting ID: 364 604 036 366
- Passcode: i3zq6ow7

5. **St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas concert**: We are holding our annual Christmas Concert in Central Hall, Tollcross on Thursday 12th December from 7:00pm to 9:30pm. Last year proved to be such an enjoyable experience for pupils, parents and staff alike that this year we would like to involve as many other pupils as possible. As such we are going to put together an S1 choir. The choir will learn the repertoire in class as part of their curriculum and there will be a couple of rehearsals later in the term to prepare. We hope to get as many S1 pupils as possible participating so the group will have an impact. Undoubtedly your child will gain from the uplifting and positive experience that group singing can bring. All S1 pupils have been given a letter, please encourage your child to participate. Please return the tear-off slip and return to the music department.

- **Tickets Price**
- Adult - £8.00
- Concession - £4.00
- Family Ticket (2 adults + 3 children) - £20.00

Refreshments will be available to purchase on the night. Please come along and enjoy the Christmas festivities along with some amazing entertainment from our very talented musicians.

6. **Christmas Jumper Day - Monday 16th of December**: The S6 Leadership Team are raising money for Teenage Cancer Trust and on **Monday 16th of December** all pupils can wear a Christmas jumper to school over their full school uniform. Please bring a small donation to raise money for such an important charity.

7. **The last day of school – Friday 20th of December:** School will close from 1.10pm on Friday 20th December with S4, 5 and 6 assemblies taking place at 12.00 noon and S1, S2, and S3 assemblies taking place at 12.30pm. The last day will be a non-uniform day and I am asking all pupils to bring a small donation of money for The Sisters of Mercy to support their work with vulnerable people over the Christmas period.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 25th November

Thank you to Mrs Patrick, Mr Kennedy, and all our singers and instrumentalists who supported Mass at St Mary's Cathedral on Tuesday 19th November. St Thomas of Aquin's is very fortunate to have such talented and supportive staff and pupils.

1. **Staffing**: Longleet interviews for a Business and Computing Teacher took place last Thursday with the shortleet interview taking place this week. Interviews for a Modern Studies and Politics teacher will take place on Monday 2nd December.

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas concert**: Our annual St Thomas of Aquin's High School Christmas Concert will take place at the Central Hall, Tollcross on Thursday 12 December from 7:00pm to

9:30pm. This is going to be an amazing event with nearly 200 pupils taking part this year. Tickets are available to purchase via Parent Pay or direct from the school office.

Tickets Price
Adult - £8.00
Concession - £4.00
Family Ticket (2 adults + 3 children) - £20.00

Refreshments will be available to purchase on the night. Please come along and enjoy the Christmas festivities along with some amazing entertainment from our very talented musicians.

3. **S2 Information evening:** Please find below the link to our S2 Parents Information Evening on Personalisation and Choice which will take place online on Thursday 28th November between 5:00 and 6:00 pm. The purpose of this meeting will be to share with you information about our curriculum structure and give you an insight into the various pathways available to pupils in S3. There will also be an opportunity to learn about progression to National Qualifications in S4 and above so that pupils and parents can make an informed decision about course choice for next session. We look forward to meeting you then.

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 373 595 984 953
Passcode: U7BNvH

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 18th November

1. **Staffing**: Interviews for a Business and Computing teacher and a Modern Studies and Politics teacher will take place over the next two weeks.

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas concert**: For all families, whether your children are performing or not, please consider attending the St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas Concert on Thursday 12th December – tickets are on sale, please contact the school admin and purchase a ticket:

3. **Catholic Education Week**: Mass for Catholic Education week will take place on Tuesday 19th November at St Mary's Cathedral.

St Thomas of Aquin's are very fortunate to be welcoming back NET Ministries to St Thomas' to deliver our Senior Retreat Programme at St Catharine's Convent, and have scheduled their visit as follows:

Monday 25 November	**S5 & 6 St Andrew's House**
Tuesday 26 November	**S5 & 6 St Margaret's House**
Wednesday 27 November	**S5 & 6 St Patrick's House**
Thursday 28 November	**Opt-in for S1-2***
Friday 29 November	**Opt-in for S3-4***

4. **S4-6 full reports and prelim 2025:** S4-S6 reports are now active on pupil tracking and will be completed by the first week in December. I envisage pupils and parents will receive these full reports prior to the Christmas holidays. The 2025 prelim document can be found on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/

5. **S2 Information Evening:** Madame Jean-Pierre will be emailing S2 parents an MS Teams link to the S2 coursing information evening for Thursday 28th November.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 11th November.

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Ms Donaldson who is the successful candidate for the permanent Physical Education teacher post. An advert for a permanent Business and Computing teacher is now live on Myjobscotland and closes on Wednesday 13th November. An advert for a permanent Modern Studies and Politics teacher post is live on Myjobscotland and closes on Wednesday 13th November.

Welcome to Mr Jamie Brown, Fixed-term English teacher, who started with us on Wednesday 6th November.

2. **Thank you to S2 Parents**: I would like to thank all of the S2 parents who attended St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday and Tuesday of last week. Thank you to the many parents complementing me on how teaching colleagues know your children so well. As a parent myself, I believe 3 of the best questions to ask Teachers are:
    - What Level is my child working at?
    - What evidence supports this judgement level?
    - What are the next steps for my child in your subject area?

3. **Catholic Education Week**: Mass for Catholic Education week will take place on Tuesday 19th November at St Mary's Cathedral.

St Thomas of Aquin's are very fortunate to be welcoming back NET Ministries to St Thomas' to deliver our Senior Retreat Programme at St Catherine's Convent, and have scheduled their visit as follows:

Monday 25 November	**S5 & 6 St Andrew's House**
Tuesday 26 November	**S5 & 6 St Margaret's House**
Wednesday 27 November	**S5 & 6 St Patrick's House**
Thursday 28 November	**Opt-in for S1-2***
Friday 29 November	**Opt-in for S3-4***

4. **S4-6 full reports and Prelim 2025:** S4-S6 reports are now active on pupil tracking and will be completed by the first week in December. I envisage pupils and parents will receive these full reports prior to the Christmas holidays.

Please find the 2025 Prelim document attached – good luck to all the S4, S5, and S6 pupils!

5. **Curriculum and Attainment policy**: Please find attached the updated draft Curriculum and Attainment policy link on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Draft-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-and-Attainment-Policy.pdf

6. **MS Teams P7 information evenings**: Please find attached the letter for the MS Teams P7 parents on 13th November.

7. **St Thomas of Aquin's S3 Digital Day:** On Wednesday 13th November St Thomas of Aquin's is running Digital Day. This is a Computing Science and Business Education experience for pupils where they learn about careers in technology. We have digital partners coming in to support us with the day from Lloyds banking group. This year's challenges are set by Microsoft, The RSPCA and Burberry Clothing. Last year St Thomas of Aquin's achieved a recognition award for this event at a national level and hopefully this year we can again! 45 S3 Students are involved this year which is our biggest number yet! We are looking forward to this event very much.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for Monday 4th November.

8. **Catholic Education Week**: Please find attached a pastoral letter regarding Catholic Education week in November.

9. **Staffing**: Interviews for the permanent Physical Education teacher post will take place on Monday 4th November. An advert for a Business and Computing teacher is now live on Myjobscotland and closes on Wednesday 13th November. .

10. **School Improvement planning update**: The Senior Leadership Team will be updating the school improvement plan during the month of November. Faculty improvement planning updates can be sent to me by the end of November.

11. **Curriculum and Attainment policy**: Please find attached the update draft Curriculum and Attainment policy. The draft policy will be placed on the school website under policies and documents.

12. **S2 Parents Evening**: S2 parents evening will take place on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th November from 5-7pm. I look forward to speaking with S2 parents during these evenings.

13. **MS Teams P7 information evenings**: Please find attached the letter for the MS Teams P7 parents information evening on 13th November.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

MONDAY 28 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 28th October. Please find attached a school letter from Police Scotland regarding November 5th Fireworks.

14. **Staffing:**. Congratulations to Mrs Walsh who is the successful candidate for the permanent teaching post in Enhanced Resource, Mrs Walsh will be starting at St Thomas of Aquin's as soon as possible. A warm welcome to Miss Smith in Biology. I will be advertising for a Business and Computing teacher in November to support a possible return of Business Education to the senior phase (S5 and S6 year groups) in session 2025-26. I will keep colleagues, pupils, and parents up to date with how the advert and possible interviews move forward.

15. **All Saints Day**: Mr Wotherspoon will be in contact with colleagues regarding the plans for All Saints Day next Friday – Friday 1st November

16. **HT Assemblies**: I would like to meet with S1-S4 pupils next week for Equality and Inclusion Assemblies:
    - **Tuesday 29th October:** S3 pupils at 2.00pm and S4 pupils at 2.50pm
    - **Wednesday 30th October:** S1 pupils at 2.00pm and S2 pupils at 2.50pm

Please find attached the HT presentation

17. **School Improvement planning update**: The Senior Leadership Team will be updating the school improvement plan during the month of November. Faculty Improvement planning updates can be sent to me by the end of November.

18. **S1 – S3 Tracking** : S3 tracking reports were sent to parents last week to support the very successful S3 parents evening experience. S1 and S2 tracking reports will be sent to parents this week.

19. **S2 Parents Evening**: S2 parents evening will take place on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th November from 5-7pm. I look forward to speaking with S2 parents during these evenings.

20. **MS Teams P7 and S2 information evenings**: Madame Jean-Pierre will be contacting associated primary parents and S2 parents regarding MS Teams information evenings: MS Teams P7 parents on 13th November and S2 parents information evening on 28th November.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER

Please find the staff briefing for Friday 11th of October.

21. **Staffing:**. Congratulations to Orla Walsh who is the successful candidate for the permanent teaching post in Enhanced Resource. St Thomas of Aquin's also welcomed Therese Mackenzie on Monday 7th as a fixed-term Maths teacher.

All the best to Ms Dallas who starts at Leith Academy after the October break and to Mr Linden with his adoption leave.

22. **November S1 cinema trip:** Please find details attached of the S1 cinema trip in November.

23. **S4- S6 Tracking** :St Thomas of Aquin's S4-S6 parents have been sent the 1st tracking report of the session. S1-S3 tracking reports will be sent to parents after the October break. A huge thank you to Ms Mariani for her work and creativity in setting up CEC's new tracking system throughout August to October.

24. **S3 Parents Evening:** On our return to school after the October break we have our first parents evening – S3 parents evening on Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th October.

25. **MS Teams P7 and S2 information evenings**: After the October break Madame Jean-Pierre will be contacting associated primary parents and S2 parents regarding MS Teams information evenings: MS Teams P7 parents on 13th November and S2 Parents Information evening on 28th November.

I wish all families a relaxing October holiday which starts from Monday 14th October. All pupils return to the school, wearing full school uniform, on Tuesday 22nd October.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 7 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 7th October…Congratulations to the school community in raising over £500 for Macmillan Cancer.

26. **Staffing:**. Unfortunately, there was no appointment made in permanent Physics teacher interviews last week. I will now wait until 2025 to refocus on a permanent Physics appointment. Shortleet interviews for the permanent teaching post in Enhanced Resource takes place today, Monday 7th October. St Thomas of Aquin's also welcomes Therese Mackenzie on Monday 7th as a fixed-term Maths teacher.

All the best to Mr Linden who will be going on Adoption Leave at the end of this week until June 2025 – we welcome Charlotte Smith on Monday 21st October to take over as a fixed-term Biology teacher.

27. **2023-24 Insight data**: The school website has been updated with the 2024 Insight data: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-Insight-Analysis-September-2024.pdf

28. **Thank you to St Vincent De Paul:** At our S1 Information Evening St Vincent de Paul visited us and gave us a donation of £750 to support St Thomas of Aquin's with the cost of excursions. I would like to thank St Vincent de Paul for this generous support.

29. **S1- S3 Tracking**: S1-S3 tracking reports will be completed on 4th October. St Thomas of Aquin's hopes to have S4-S6 tracking reports to pupils and parents prior to the October break.

30. **S3 Parents Evening:** On our return to school after the October break we have our first parents evening – S3 parents evening on Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th October.

I wish all families a relaxing October holiday which starts from Monday 14th October. All pupils return to the school, wearing full school uniform, on Tuesday 22nd October.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 30th September. Thank you to the S1 parents who attended a very informative S1 parents information evening. Thank you to Madame Jean-Pierre, Mrs Hastings, and the S6 Leadership Team for their planning.

31. **Staffing:**. Interviews for permanent teaching posts in Physics and Enhanced Resource take place this week along with a fixed-term English post interview.

32. **2023-24 Insight data**: I have completed a draft St Thomas of Aquin's Insight analysis for 2023-24 which I believe shows what a very good and maybe even excellent year S4-S6 pupils have experienced in terms of attainment. I will be sharing the documents with the Parent Council and placing the summary on the school website in October. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their delivery of outcomes for our pupils.

33. **S1- S3 Tracking**: S1-S3 Tracking Reports will be completed on 4th October. St Thomas of Aquin's hopes to have S4-S6 Tracking Reports to pupils and parents prior to the October break.

34. **Key dates:** Please find key dates on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Parent-key-dates-calendar-2024-25.pdf

Regards
Christopher Santini

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St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT Parent briefing for Monday 23rd September; thank you to the Parent Council for a positive and informative meeting last Thursday.

35. **Staffing:**. Charlotte Smith is the successful candidate for the fixed-term Biology post and we hope to have Charlotte with us as soon as possible. Permanent teaching posts in Physics and Enhanced Resource close on the 19th September. A fixed-term English advert closes on 1st October.

36. **S4- S6 Tracking**: The first tracking reports for S4-S6 pupils has been completed for Friday 20th September. Pupils and Parents will receive these tracking reports in early October once quality assurance procedures have been completed. Please find parent CEC support documents regarding the new tracking system being implemented throughout all Edinburgh schools.

37. **S6 Charity 2024-25:** The S6 Leadership Team have identified **Teenage Cancer Trust** as the charity to fundraise for this year. The Teenage Cancer Trust has two units in Edinburgh, one in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and one in the Western General: https://www.teenagecancertrust.org

38. **S1 introduction evening** – Thursday 26th September. We are looking forward to meeting as many S1 parents at Thursday's information meeting

Teas and Coffees in the hall from 5.45
Music

6.00-6.05 pm	Welcome	
6.05-6.10 pm	A day in the Life of an S1 pupil (Video)	
6.10-6.20 pm	Role of the (PSL)/ Pastoral structure	
6.20 until 7.00 pm	Choice of Workshops	
6.20 – 6.35 pm	Session 1	ICT Workshop (x3) Supporting learning through ICT Tour of the school (x3) Stalls Uniform, Bus Pass, Extra curricular clubs , Counselling, parent council -
6.40- 6.55pm 6.55-7.00 pm	Session 2 Closing remarks / questions	ICT Workshop (x3) Supporting learning through ICT Tour of the school (x3) Stalls Uniform, Bus Pass, Extra curricular clubs , Counselling, parent council

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Friday 13th September, please be mindful that Monday 16th September is a school holiday.

39. **Staffing:**. Ms Moreno has been successful in a Support for Learning position at another CEC Secondary School. Ms Moreno has been an exceptional colleague to work with and the respect she holds amongst colleagues, parents, and pupils is so very high. I wish Ms Moreno all the best with her new post starting on Thursday 26th September. Interviews for a Fixed-term Biology post will take place on Tuesday 17th September. Permanent Teaching posts in Physics and Enhanced Resource close on the 19th September.

40. **S4- S6 Tracking**: The first tracking reports for S4-S6 pupils will be completed for Friday 20th September. Pupils and parents will receive them in early October once quality assurance procedures have been completed.

41. **Extra-curricular clubs**: Please find the St Thomas of Aquin's lunchtime and afterschool clubs link on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime_and-after_school_clubs/sports-clubs/

42. **Thank you to our parents and pupils**: I would like to thank parents and pupils for their support with how pupils are positively behaving around the Keir Street area – I will continue to make weekly visits. Unfortunately I received an email from a restaurant in Forrest Road who have identified a very small

amount of S2 and S3 pupils who have come to their attention in and out of the shop. I will visit the restaurant and look at the CCTV. Can I ask parents to discuss with their children how we all continue to behave in a calm and positive manner around central Edinburgh at break and lunchtime.

43. **Charities**: St Thomas of Aquin's receives a number of queries to support charities throughout a school year. To support a transparent process of the charities the school can support in any given year I have asked the S6 Leadership Team to identify a charity which they will be identifying next week. St Thomas of Aquin's will continue to support The Sisters of Mercy Charity as the founders of our school; and Macmillan Cancer Charity as this has supported the school community throughout the last 15 years. Every year the S6 Leadership Team will have a leadership decision in choosing a named charity in which pupils can fundraise for.

44. **Parents Council Meeting:** The first Parent Council meeting takes place on Thursday 19th September from 6.30pm in Room 3.33 (Modern Languages) – agenda attached.

S1 introduction evening – Thursday 26th September - provisional information below.

Teas and Coffees in the hall from 5.45
Music

6.00-6.05 pm	Welcome	
6.05-6.10 pm	A day in the Life of an S1 pupil (Video)	
6.10-6.20 pm	Role of the (PSL)/ Pastoral structure	
6.20 until 7.00 pm	Choice of Workshops	
6.20 – 6.35 pm	Session 1	ICT Workshop (x3) Supporting learning through ICT Tour of the school (x3) Stalls Uniform, Bus Pass, Extra curricular clubs , Counselling, parent council -
6.40- 6.55pm 6.55-7.00 pm	Session 2 Closing remarks / questions	ICT Workshop (x3) Supporting learning through ICT Tour of the school (x3) Stalls Uniform, Bus Pass, Extra curricular clubs , Counselling, parent council

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 9th September; please remember that Monday 16th September is a school holiday.

St Thomas of Aquin's looks forward to His Grace, Leo Cushley, visiting our school on Tuesday 10th of September from 9.00am to 10.30am.

45. **Staffing:**. Interviews for the Fixed-Term Maths Teacher took place on Tuesday 3rd September and the successful candidate is Therese Mackenzie. Interviews for a Fixed-term Biology post will take place on Tuesday 17th September.

46. **Extra-curricular clubs**: Please find attached the St Thomas of Aquin's lunchtime and afterschool clubs. Pupils will attend an Extracurricular Assembly to showcase all of these great opportunities and they are also found in weekly pupil bulletin and parents can find this on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/lunchtime_and-after_school_clubs/sports-clubs/

3. **Charities**: St Thomas of Aquin's receives a number of queries to support charities throughout a school year. To support a transparent process of the charities the school can support in any given year I have asked the S6 Leadership Team to identify a charity which they will be identifying next week; St Thomas of Aquin's will continue to support The Sisters of Mercy Charity as the founders of our school; and Macmillan Cancer Charity as this has supported the school community throughout the last 15 years. Every year the S6 Leadership Team will have a leadership decision in choosing a named charity in which pupils can fundraise for.

5. **Parents Evening Dates:**

- **S1 Introduction evening** – Thursday 26th of September - information to come from Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs Hastings
- **S3 Parents Evenings:** 23rd and 24th of October 2024
- **S2 Parents Evenings**: 4th and 5th of November 2024
- **S5-6 Parents Evening:** 20th of February 2025
- **S4 Parents Evening:** 4th of March 2025
- **S1 Parents Evenings:** 13th and 14th of May 2025

- **Christmas Concert**: 12th of December 2024
- **Spring Concert:** 20th of March 2025
- **Senior Awards Evening:** 11th of June 2025

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parent briefing for the week beginning Monday 2nd September. Congratulations to our S6 Leadership Team for session 2024-25 – please find the S6 Leadership Team attachment.

1. **Staffing:** Shortleet interviews for a permanent Chemistry Teacher took place this week and congratulations to Caitlin Harley who will be joining St Thomas of Aquin's shortly. St Thomas of Aquin's said goodbye to Keiron Begley on Friday and we wish him all the best with his new job starting on Monday 2nd. Interviews for the Fixed-Term Maths Teacher will take place on Tuesday 3rd September and interviews for a Fixed-term Biology post will be planned for in early September. I have identified funding for a permanent Physics Teacher and the process of advertising has already started.

2. **S4-S6 Information Evening – MS Teams Tuesday 3rd September from 5.30pm:** S4-S6 Parents are invited to an online MS Teams meeting focusing on the curriculum pathways, UCAS, coursing, and attainment. Ms Mariani sent out a link for the Tuesday 3rd of September 5.30-6.30.meeting last week. To join the meeting please click on the link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_N2QwZmJmNmMtYmI4OC00ZDI5LTlhNDMtNGJmMjkzMGE4MThk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2248acfe69-376a-42b5-9f69-c9e47bbfb9c4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22517c630d-138b-4abb-a3c3-d649993c91fe%22%7d

3. **Parents Evening Dates:**

- **S1 Introduction evening** – Thursday 26th of September - information to come from Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs Hastings
- **S3 Parents Evenings:** 23rd and 24th of October 2024
- **S2 Parents Evenings**: 4th and 5th of November 2024
- **S5-6 Parents Evening:** 20th of February 2025
- **S4 Parents Evening:** 4th of March 2025
- **S1 Parents Evenings:** 13th and 14th of May 2025

- **Christmas Concert**: 12th of December 2024
- **Spring Concert:** 20th of March 2025
- **Senior Awards Evening:** 11th of June 2025

4. **Homestudy**: Homestudy Club for session 2024-25 will take place every Monday and Wednesday 15:30-16:15 in room 2.07.

5. **Caritas Award:** St Thomas of Aquin's are currently recruiting for the Caritas Award which requires S6 pupils to complete 40 hours of voluntary service in their school and parish communities. If you are a parent of a pupil in S6, please encourage them to sign up with the RE Faculty. We are also looking for opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in their local parishes e.g. children's liturgy, cleaning the church, counting, gardening, altar serving, serving tea and coffee. If you are involved in any of these things in your own parish and would be willing to support pupils completing Caritas, please contact Mr Wotherspoon via the school admin account.

6. **Attainment Meetings**: Curricular Leaders will be meeting with me for attainment meetings from Monday 2nd of September. Please find the 2023-24 SQA attainment summary which has been added to the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/

7. **Senior recoursing**: Ms Mariani has finished S4-S6 recoursing. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2024-25. Senior pupils will complete all of their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. In session 2024-25, all senior pupils will be presented for all of their National Qualifications subjects and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is needed.

8. **Lunchtime and afterschool Clubs:** Mrs Hastings will be collating the lunchtime and afterschool clubs for session 2024-25 and ensuring pupils and parents know about the days and times of the clubs.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 26 AUGUST

Good morning to parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

I have been very impressed with our start to the new term and I do hope the positive ethos and calm learning environment continues throughout this week. Please find the HT parent briefing for week beginning Monday 26th August.

1. **School Improvement Plan**: Please find the completed School Improvement Plan for session 2024-25 which will be added to the school website in due course.

2. **S4-S6 Information Evening – MS Teams Tuesday 3rd September from 5.30pm:** S4-S6 Parents are invited to an online MS Teams meeting focusing on the curriculum pathways, UCAS, coursing, and attainment. Ms Mariani sent out a link for the.meeting last week.

To join the meeting please click on the link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_N2QwZmJmNmMtYmI4OC00ZDI5LTlhNDMtNGJmMjkzMGE4MThk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2248acfe69-376a-42b5-9f69-c9e47bbfb9c4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22517c630d-138b-4abb-a3c3-d649993c91fe%22%7d

3. **Staffing:** Longleet interviews for a permanent Chemistry Teacher took place last week with short-leet interview being held on Tuesday 27th August. An Advert for a part-time Fixed-Term Physics Teacher and a part-time Fixed-Term Maths Teacher has closed and we hope to make decisions on next steps this week.

4. **Attainment Meetings**: Curricular Leaders will be meeting with me for attainment meetings from Monday 2nd September. Please find the 2023-24 SQA attainment summary which will be added to the school website in due course.

5. **Senior recoursing**: Ms Mariani has finished S4-S6 recoursing. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2024-25. Senior pupils will complete all of their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. In session 2024-25, all senior pupils will be presented for all of their National Qualifications subjects and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is needed.

6. **Lunchtime and afterschool Clubs:** Mrs Hastings will be collating the lunchtime and afterschool clubs for session 2024-25 and ensuring pupils and parents know about the days and times of the clubs.

Finally, It was lovely to meet with the Parent Council chairs on Friday to identify the 5 Parent Council meetings for the year and the first Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday 19th September in St Thomas of Aquin's from 6.30pm. Before the October break, the Senior Leadership Team and the S6 Leadership Team will organise a 'Welcome S1 Parents to St Thomas of Aquin's' event which will involve a tour of the school, a focus on iPads use, and tea/coffees.

MONDAY 19 AUGUST

Good morning St Thomas of Aquin's parents, please find the HT briefing for Monday 19th August.

All year groups have now enjoyed a Standards and Expectations Assembly which focussed on the following key messages:

- Pupils arriving on time for school - 1st bell goes at 8.38am for Key Adult Classes – there is free breakfast for all pupils in the main hall from 8.15am.
- Pupils wearing full school uniform; iPads charged and in bags; and ready with PE kits when appropriate – pupils should not wear PE to school but can leave at the end of the school day in their PE kit if they wish.
- Pupil switching off their mobile phones and placing phones in their bags whilst in all classes – this includes Key Adult Class.
- Pupils enjoying their break and lunchtime in a caring and inclusive manner and supporting good behaviour in and out of the school building

One of the areas I did speak with all pupils about was the behaviour and actions of a small group of pupils last year around Keir Street and The College of Art. Unfortunately, this very public area became a place where pupils congregated to discuss and sometimes physically act on what had been shared on social media. I have explained to pupils that they are welcome to use the shop at Keir Street and then move on from the area. I do not wish pupils to gather in this area and I will be trying to get out of the building to support our pupils around Keir Street.

7. **Staffing:** Longleet interviews for a permanent Chemistry Teacher will take place this week. An Advert for a part-time Fixed-Term Physics Teacher and a part-time Fixed-Term Maths Teacher closes this week.
8. **Communication**: Please find attached a message from His Grace Leo Cushley and from Lorna French.

9. **Senior recoursing**: Ms Mariani will be finishing S4-S6 recoursing by the end of next week. I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2024-25. Senior pupils will complete all of their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. All senior pupils will be presented for all of their National Qualifications subjects and the school will not withdraw pupils from courses unless there is an exceptional medical or family circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member if a discussion is needed.
10. **S6 Leadership positions**: Interviews for the positions of Headgirl and Headboy, Depute Headboy and Depute Headgirl took place at the end of last term and we have the following S6 Leaders in place:

- **Head Girl:** Joanna Boulis
- **Depute Head Girl:** Polly Dickson-Smith
- **Head Boy**: Aiden McLeod
- **Depute Head Boy:** Andrew Oloju

I met with the S6 year group on Wednesday 16th August to ask for any further applications - interviews for House, Sports, Equalities, Music/Art Captains will take place this week.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY 24 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the final HT briefing before the summer holidays. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families the very best for July and I hope that you all find some time to relax and enjoy wherever you are.

Congratulations to all colleagues and S6 pupils supporting the P7 3 day visit last week, it was a great experience for the school and I do believe our new S1 pupils and parents will enjoy their time at St Thomas of Aquin's.

The last day of term is Friday 28th June and pupils will be allowed to wear non-uniform appropriate clothing. There will be 2 Assemblies to say goodbye to pupils:
S4-S6 Assembly from 12 noon onwards and S1-S3 Assembly from 12.30 onwards. There will be a staff meeting from 1.15 to say goodbye to colleagues.

11. **School and Faculty improvement planning**: Please find attached the draft School Improvement Plan.

12. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mr Begley who has been successful in becoming a permanent Chemistry Teacher in Falkirk Council. Mr Begley will be starting his post in September and on behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's colleagues, I wish him all the best with his future. Congratulations to Mrs Lopez who has become a permanent Clerical Assistant at St Thomas of Aquin's. Congratulations to Miss Wood who was the preferred candidate for a Fixed-term Physical Education post at St Thomas of Aquin's.

    After almost 8 years of very good wellbeing support for pupils, colleagues, and parents Place2Be will be leaving St Thomas of Aquin's next week. I would like to thank Alexia, Jonathan, and all of the counsellors who have

worked at St Thomas of Aquin's during their time with us. I believe the organisation has made a significant positive impact with their presence in the school and on a personal note I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Alexia.

13. **S6 Leadership positions**: Interviews for the positions of Headgirl and Headboy, Depute Headboy and Depute Headgirl will take place on Thursday 27th June. The top five girls and top five boys from the staff and pupil vote will be interviewed by a panel of Headteacher, Depute Headteacher, and a Leadership Team member (the panel will not take part in the vote).

And finally, the SQA exam results will be sent to all pupils in early August (6th August) , I wish all of our pupils the very best. I will be emailing families with a St Thomas of Aquin's preparation email for returning to school in early August.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 17 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 17th June. I wish to extend Eid Mubarak to all of our families celebrating.

1. **School and Faculty improvement analysis and future planning**: I will share a draft 2024-25 School Improvement Plan with pupils and parents on Monday 24th June.

2. **Staffing**: Mrs MacDonald will be retiring at the end of this term and I would like to extend my thanks for the immense support Mrs MacDonald has afforded pupils, parents and colleagues at St Thomas of Aquin's. I have had the pleasure of working with Mrs MacDonald since 2013 and her high standards, commitment to the teaching profession, and love of St Thomas of Aquin's has been incredible.

   Ms Kavak will be taking a year's sabbatical in session 2024-25 and she will be missed by pupils, parents, and colleagues.
   Unfortunately we did not make an appointment for a permanent part-time Computing Science Teacher. A permanent Spanish and French Teacher advert closed on June 10th and we will be interviewing candidates on Friday 21st June.

3. **The St Thomas Times**: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/St.-Thomas-Times-summer-edition-1.pdf Enjoy reading this new pupil-led magazine strategically led by Ms Harley!

4. **S6 Leadership positions**: During this week staff and S6 pupils will vote for their preferred S6 leadership candidates for the positions of Headgirl and Headboy, Depute Headboy and Depute Headgirl. The top

five/six girls and top five/six boys will then be interviewed by a panel of Headteacher, Depute Headteacher, and a Leadership Team member (the panel will not take part in the vote). I hope to be able to come back to all pupils and parents with the successful names by the end of term.

Unsuccessful candidates can, if they wish, put their names forward for the House Captain, Sports Captain, Equalities Captain, Music and Art Captain, and Prefect positions which will be completed in August.

5. **Congratulations to Dr Bogomazova and the Climate Action Group**: Thanks to the Climate Action Group for all of their work last week.

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's is looking forward to the P7/S1 3 day visit happening on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week. I am looking forward to welcoming our new S1 cohort.**

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 10 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 10th June – I have attached an update on Scotland's Education Bill – an important read.

1. **School and Faculty improvement analysis and future planning**: A draft School Improvement Plan will be completed for Friday 14th June. Faculty improvement plans are to be sent to me by Monday 24th June.

   Parents and pupils will receive copies of the School Improvement Plan in the last week for term for reading and comments.

2. **Staffing**: Ms Grindall will be retiring at the end of this term and I would like to extend my thanks for not only the support and dedication Ms Grindall has given St Thomas of Aquin's pupils in Drama lessons but my huge appreciation for strategic lead of the Drama club and all the productions that pupils have been involved in. Please take time to appreciate all that Ms Grindall has achieved at St Thomas of Aquins and lets make her final weeks at St Thomas of Aquin's a great experience for her.

   Congratulations to Samantha Foggo, Gemma Perry, and Olivia Gilmour who are the successful candidates for the Fixed term History and Modern Studies Teacher took place on Thursday 30th May.
   Please find attached a Business Education plan for session 2024-25.
   An advert for a permanent part-time Computing Science Teacher closed on June 3rd and I am interviewing candidates on Tuesday 11th June. A permanent Spanish and French Teacher advert closes on June 10th.

3. **S6 Leadership positions**: I met with all S6 pupils who were in school on Friday 7th June. Please find an updated document on S6 Leadership positions. I understand that S6 will be on work experience this week and I have explained to them that applications for a post/posts (S6 pupils can apply for more than 1) are to be handed in or emailed to Ms Mariani by Friday 14th June.

   During the week beginning Monday 17th June the positions of Headgirl and Headboy, Depute Headboy and Depute Headgirl will be the focus. There will be a staff and S6 vote for all pupils who have applied for the positions and then the those pupils who have received the highest votes will be interviewed by a panel of Headteacher, Depute head teacher, and a Leadership Team member. I hope to be able to come back to all parents with the successful names by the end of term.
   Unsuccessful candidates can, if they wish, put their names forward for the House Captain, Sports Captain, equalities Captain, Music and Art Captain, and Prefect positions which will be completed in August.

4. **Rights Respecting Schools Silver Awards:** Congratulations to Ms McGowan, colleagues, and RRS pupils for achieving the **Rights Respecting Schools Silver: Rights Aware** following Thursday 6th of June Accreditation visit. 😄. The assessor was extremely positive about the school's rights journey and very impressed with the pupils that he met. Congratulations to:

- Cameron Cheape
- Euan Archibald
- Ruby D'Ambrosio
- Eimear Young
- Sophie Stewart
- Poppy Willis
- Ala Kowalewska
- Cerys Reed Maddy
- Letizia Morana
- Henry Molina

5. **Climate Relay**: Good luck to the pupils taking part in Climate Relay on **Monday** (10th June) during **Period 1 and 2**. The event is part of The Big Green Week and a part of the nation-wide event (wish them luck as this is also part of their S2 Climate Wars). You can find more info here: https://running-out-of-time.com/Schools-2024. The relay will be happening outside in the picnic area.

- **S2 pupils:**
- Ciara McCarthy Cunningham
- Victoria Dudek
- Imogen Muir
- Tymon Karwowski
- Calum McBean
- Valencia Alsiwaldi
- Finlay Guild
- Dmitri Griffin
- Freja Johnston
- Cloe Ara Costa

- **Climate Action pupils (support Team):**
- Lera Bineesh
- Ria Singh
- Molly O'Connor
- Logan Young

- Robina Harding
- Cariba Falconer
- Hailey Jessop

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's is looking forward to the P7/S1 3 day visit happening on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next week. I am looking forward to welcoming our new S1 cohort.**

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 3 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 3rd June

7. **School and Faculty improvement analysis and future planning**: A draft School Improvement Plan will be the main focus of the Senior Leadership Team on Tuesday 4th June. The Leadership Team and Faculty colleagues can now start to use their exiting Faculty Plans and develop the SQR themes/School Improvement themes into their F2024-25 Faculty plans.

   The last Voluntary Leadership Team meeting on Wednesday 5th June at 3.45 will support colleagues with Faculty Improvement planning.

8. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mrs Thomson who is the successful candidate for a permanent Business Education Teacher position in West Lothian. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Thomson for all of her support of St Thomas of Aquin's pupils during her time at the school. All the best Mrs Thomson!

   This does mean that St Thomas of Aquin's moves into June and August with no Business Education Teachers. St Thomas of Aquin's has interviewed 3 times since January 2024 and unfortunately the preferred candidates have decided not to take up the permanent positions. I will be working, during June and August, with staff, pupils, and parents to plan for meaningful and sustainable learning in the Social Subjects Faculty to support this temporary loss of colleagues as well as plan for the long-term stability of learning, teaching, and attainment in the Faculty.

   Interviews for full-time Fixed term History and Modern Studies Teacher took place on Thursday 30th May and I will be update the school community with plans very soon. An advert for a permanent part-time Computing Science Teacher closes on June 3rd, and a permanent Spanish and French Teacher's post on June 10th.

9. **French visit:** A big thanks to Mrs Lauckner and the Modern Language Faculty for the excellent and rather exciting Paris visitors experience.

10. **Career event**: Thanks to Mr Rafferty, our DYW partners, and our parents for the S1,2,3 Careers event last week.

11. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council (AGM) meeting will take place on Monay 3rd June from 6.30. At this meeting I will share the staffing at St Thomas of Aquin's RC High school for session 2024-25.

12. **The Big Green week**: Please find attached the information for the BIG Green Week organised by Kristine…

13. **Junior and Senior Awards Ceremony**: A huge thanks to Mrs Hastings and all colleagues, parents, and pupils for taking part in our Junior Awards and Senior Awards. Both events were a great advert for the inclusive and high achieving ethos at St Thomas of Aquin's. Congratulations to all of our award winners.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 27 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for Monday 27th May. Good luck to pupils sitting their SQA exams this week and to welcoming back many of our senior pupils next Monday.

1. **School and Faculty improvement analysis and future planning**: Please find the collated school improvement themes which I have taken from the 2024 pupil, parent, and staff surveys. The Senior Leadership Team are meeting on Tuesday 28th May to finalise our 2023-4 Standards and Quality Report and will begin to identify which of the improvement themes can be placed in our rolling School Improvement Plan (found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Feb-2024-School-Imp.-Plan-Update.pdf).

    - The Standards and Quality report is required to be sent to the school's QIEO by 10th June
    - The School Improvement plan is required to be sent to the school's QIEO by the 17th June and I would like Faculty Improvemnet plans in to me by Monday 24th June

2. **Staffing**: Interviews for a full-time Fixed term History and Modern Studies Teacher will take place on Thursday 30th May. An advert for a permanent Business Education Teacher closes on MJS on 29th May. An advert for a permanent part-time Computing Science Teacher closes on June 3rd.

3. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council (AGM) meeting will take place on Monay 3rd June from 6.30pm.

4. **Junior and Senior Awards Ceremony**: The Junior Awards will take place in school time on Tuesday 28th May and the Senior Awards Ceremony will be taking place on Thursday 30th May from 5.30pm. The school community are looking forward to celebrating the achievements of St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

MONDAY 20 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's , please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 20th May

1. **School and Faculty improvement analysis and future planning**: This week the SLT are focussing on the completion of a draft 2024 Standards and Quality Report based on the Quality Indicators of 1.3 (Leadership of Change); 2.3 (Learning, Teaching, and Assessment); 3.1 (Ensuring Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion); and 3.2 (Attainment and Achievement). Once this document has been completed (with voices from pupils, parents, and staff surveys) next steps can be identified to support a 2024-5 school improvement plan.

   The Leadership Team meeting planned for Wednesday 22nd May will focus on the identification of improvement themes for session 2024-25.

2. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Corrine Kirk who is the preferred candidate for the CDT position subject to references and Catholic Approval. An advert for a full-time Fixed term History and Modern Studies teacher closes on MJS on the 20th May. An advert for a permanent Business Education teacher closes on MJS on 29th May.

3. **S1 Parents Evening**: Thank you to all parents and staff for 2 very successful S1 parents evenings.

4. **Change of Timetable – Tuesday 21st May**: S1-S3 pupils will be changing their timetables on Tuesday 21st May. All the best to the new S2, S3, and S4 year groups.

5. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council (AGM) meeting will take place on Monday 3rd June from 6.30pm

6. **Senior Awards Ceremony**: The Senior Awards Ceremony will be taking place on Thursday 30th May

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 13 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 13th May, good luck to all pupils sitting SQA exams this week

7. **School improvement analysis and future planning**: This week school planning is focussing on the completion of a draft 2024 Standards and Quality Report based on the Quality Indicators of 1.3 (Leadership of Change); 2.3 (Learning, Teaching, and Assessment); 3.1 (Ensuring Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion); and 3.2 (Attainment and Achievement). Once this document has been completed (with voices from pupils, parents, and staff surveys) next steps can be identified to support a 2024-5 school improvement plan.

8. **Adverse Childhood Experience training**: School staff enjoyed a presentation on Adverse Childhood Experience on Tuesday 7th May which will help support St Thomas of Aquin's getting it right for all pupils.

9. **Staffing**: CDT interviews will take place on Monday 13th May – good luck to all of the candidates. An advert for a full-time fixed term History and Modern Studies teacher closes on MJS on the 20th May.

10. **S1 Parents Evening**: With parents being able to meet with as many teachers as possible over the 2 evenings and time slots being 5 minutes long I believe 2 very good points to discuss between parents and teachers are:

- What Level is my Child working at?
- What is my Child's next steps in learning?

Tuesday 14th May 2024	**Wednesday 15th May 2024**
English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning/ WBH	Pupil Support Leaders

Regards
Christopher Santini

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FRIDAY 3 MAY

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Friday 3rd May, a reminder Monday 6th May is school holiday, Tuesday 7th May is an in-service for staff, and all pupils return to school on Wednesday 8th May.

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mrs Walsh who has been offered the position of permanent Biology with Chemistry Teacher post subject to references and Catholic approval.

2. **The Wellbeing Hub**: The Wellbeing Hub has moved to a larger, brighter, and more welcoming room on Level 4.

3. **2024 Pupil survey analysis**: Please find attached the 2024 pupil survey analysis.

4. **Ascension Thursday**: Mr Wotherspoon is planning for S1-S3 pupils attending Assemblies on Thursday 9th May.

5. **S1 Parents Evening**: With parents being able to meet with as many teachers as possible over the 2 evenings and time slots being 5 minutes long I believe 2 very good points to discuss between parents and teacher are:

- What level is my child working at?
- What is my child's next steps in learning?

Tuesday 14th May 2024	**Wednesday 15th May 2024**

English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning/ WBH	Pupil Support Leaders

MONDAY 29 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 29th April, good luck to all pupils sitting their SQA exams this week

6. **Staffing**: Shortleet interviews for a permanent teacher in Biology with Chemistry will take place this week. A permanent Business Education teacher, Miss Lauren McLaughlin, has been offered the position subject to references and Catholic approval.

2. **S3 (new S4) Year Head change**: Ms Mariani will take on the S3 Year Head duties as of Monday 29th April. Ms Mariani will hold a short Assembly on Monday 29th Lesson 3.

3. **CAT (**Collegiate Activity Time) **session Monday 29th April**: Ms Hunter will be leading the CAT session on Monday 29th April from 3.45 in the main hall: The CAT session is focussing on unconscious bias and Decolonising the curriculum.

4. **S1 Parents Evening**: I am looking forward to meeting with all S1 Parents on **Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th May** at the 2 parents evenings; having the S1 Parents Evenings over 2 nights we hope parents can get to speak with as many teachers as possible.

Tuesday 14th May 2024	**Wednesday 15th May 2024**

English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects

Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning/ WBH	Pupil Support Leaders

- **link to the 2024 Parent Survey analysis:** https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2024-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf

5. **Place2Be - School Counselling:** As St Thomas of Aquin's moves into a new session (2024-25), St Thomas of Aquin's will align itself with other Edinburgh Secondary schools by using City of Edinburgh appointed School Counsellors. I would like to take this opportunity to thanks Place2Be for their support of pupils and parents since 2016 and wish the organisation all the best with their future.

6. **Standards and Quality Report (SQR) and School Improvement Planning**:

   Faculties will complete their improvement plan updates and send them to me by Friday 3rd May.
   The Leadership Team will be completing their Learning, Teaching, and Assessment 2.3 Quality Indicator and Ensuring Wellbeing and Inclusion 3.1 indicator updates by Friday 10th May

   The 2024 pupil survey analysis will be sent to all parents and pupils next week.

7. **Senior Awards:** Mrs Hastings is working with colleagues and liaising with The Parent Council with the planning for the Senior Awards Ceremony which will take place on **Thursday 30th May**. The Junior Awards ceremony will take place during school time on Tuesday 28th May. We will keep parents up to date with the planning throughout April and May.

   Can all Faculties complete nominations by Friday 3rd May

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY 22 APRIL

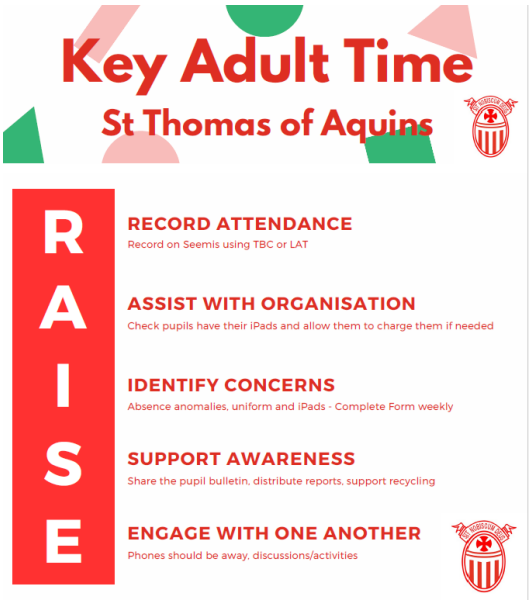
Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for **Monday 22nd April:**

1. **Staffing**: We wish Mrs Rocke all the best with her maternity leave which started on Friday 19th April. Interviews for a permanent teacher in Biology/Chemistry as well as a permanent teacher in Business Studies will take place this week. Good luck to all candidates.

2. **Supporting a nurturing and positive start to lessons:** Thank you to colleagues for supporting a calm start to all lessons by supporting **pupils taking off their jackets**, **asking pupils to switch off their phones/placing them in bags**, **and allowing pupils to use the toilet when absolutely required**.

   SLT will continue to ensure toilets are being used responsibly, ask pupils to hand phones over if they have them whilst out of classes/on a toilet break, and where needs be communicate this with parents.

3. **Key Adult Time**: As of today, Monday 22nd April, St Thomas of Aquin's will be refocusing the Key Adult Time experience for pupils. Thank you for supporting St Thomas of Aquin's by ensuring your children are in full school uniform, arrive on time for school (before 8.38am), and have a charged iPad. Please support the school with discussing the below RAISE Key Adult vision.



4. **S1 Parents Evening**: I am looking forward to meeting with all S1 parents on **Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th May** at the 2 parent's evenings; having the S1 parents evenings over 2 nights we hope parents can get to speak with as many teachers as possible.

Tuesday 14th May 2024	**Wednesday 15th May 2024**
English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning/ WBH	Pupil Support Leaders

5. **2024 Parent surveys:** Please find attached the 2024 parent survey analysis. This will be placed on the school website and the 2023 parent survey deleted – parents will read that the 2023 stats have been added to the 2024 analysis.

6. **Place2Be - School Counselling:** As we move into a new session (2024-25), St Thomas of Aquin's will align itself with other Edinburgh Secondary schools by using City of Edinburgh appointed School Counsellors. I would like to take this opportunity to thanks Place2Be for their support of pupils and parents since 2016 and wish the organisation all the best with their future.

7. **Standards and Quality Report (SQR) and School Improvement Planning:** The first piece of school improvement planning work for all Faculties and the Senior Leadership Team is to complete a final analysis of faculty and school plans and all colleagues supporting the SLT complete the 2024 Standards and Quality Report. The 2023 Standards and Quality Report can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Aug-23-Standards-and-Quality-Report-2.pdf .

   The 2024 Standards and Quality Report supports the school with a detailed analysis of how it is comparing itself to Education Scotland's How Good is Our School 4 – the document that His Majesties Inspectorate will use when visiting and reporting on a school.

   I have asked the Senior Leadership Team to complete their individual Quality Indicators of the 2024 Standards and Quality Reports by mid-May and CLs/PSLs/SfLLs and all Staff will be asked for information by the SLT – please support so we can then identify next steps. These identified next steps along with the analysis of Parent, Pupil, and Staff 2024 surveys will help shape the School Improvement Plan.

   The updated 2023-24 school improvement plan can be viewed here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Feb-2024-School-Imp.-Plan-Update.pdf

8. **Senior Awards:** Mrs Hastings is working with colleagues and liaising with The Parent Council with the planning for the Senior Awards Ceremony which will take place on **Thursday 30th May**. The Junior Awards ceremony will take place during school time on Tuesday 28th May. We will keep parents up to date with the planning throughout April and May.

MONDAY 15 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

I hope you have enjoyed a restful Easter holiday. I welcome back all families to St Thomas of Aquin's for what will be another busy term. Please find a short HT briefing email for the first week back at for all pupils and… the final week for many senior pupils sitting their SQA exams.

1. **Tuesday 16th April S6 Assembly:** I will be meeting with all S6 pupils for 10 minutes to discuss their last few days at school and the school's expectations for their last day on Friday 19th April. For Friday 19th April I am expecting:

- **All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform**: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- **All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner** which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- **I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building**. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- **I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school** and how they conduct themselves in the school building.

In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to unacceptable and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2023-24 S6 year group – who have been a great year group at the school we all love.

2. **Ms Mariani will be leading on S4 and S5 Assemblies on Thursday 18th April -** S4 and S5 last day at school before the start of the SQA exams is Thursday 18th April.

3. **Standards and Quality Report (SQR) analysis, Surveys, and School Improvement planning:** At Tuesday's SLT meeting I will be asking the team to meet with me in mid-May for updated returns on their SLT strategic remit areas. The Senior Leadership Team will be supported by the Parent and Pupil surveys to support our improvement analysis and next steps in terms of school improvement.

   Throughout April and May I will keep parents up to date with the school improvement agenda. Please be reassured that via your survey returns your voice will be heard and placed in the school improvement plan.

4. **Senior Awards:** Mrs Hastings will be full steam ahead with the organisation for the Senior Awards Ceremony which is being planned for the final week in May – Thursday 30th May as a potential date.

5. **Key dates for this term**:

Date	Year group	Action
Thursday 18 April	S5	P6 assembly and leave for exam leave
Thursday 18 April	S4	P7 assembly and leave for exam leave

Friday 19 April	S6	9am-10.15 last day event tbc with PSLs
Friday 19 April	S4/5	Exam leave
Monday 22 April	S6	Exam leave
Monday 29 April to Friday 24 May	S4 and ASN S5/6 only	Meaningful May programme
Tuesday 21 May	New S2, S3 and S4	new timetable starts
Friday 31 May	S4-5 (old)	Exam leave ends
Monday 3 June	S5 (new)	retreat day
Tuesday 4 June	S5 (new)	New TT starts
Monday 3 June to Wednesday 5 June inclusive	S6 (new)	Induction days
Thursday 6 June	S6 (new)	New TT starts

I will be back in touch with all parents on Monday 22nd April's HT parent briefing with a summary analysis of the 2024 Parent survey. The 2024 Pupil survey will close this week…so far we have 348 pupils completing this but wish to get to over 400.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

MONDAY 25 MARCH

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the parent briefing for Monday 25th March – the Easter Holidays start on Friday 29th March with **Thursday 28th March being the last day of term**. All staff and pupils return to school on Tuesday 16th April. I wish you and your families a lovely Easter holiday.

9. **The Easter Concert – Congratulations:** Congratulations to Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, Ms Grindall, Ms Harley, all of our visiting Music Instructors, and all of our talented pupils for an exceptional Easter Concert on Thursday 21st March. As ever the musical talent on show was fantastic and this year the audience, who packed out main hall, experienced 2 Drama performances from the Drama Club –

excerpts from Oh What a Lovely war and Grease! They certainly delivered! Well done to everyone involved.

10. **Holy week:** As we move into Easter Holy week I would like to thank Mr Wotherspoon and Ms Luncanu for all of their support with morning prayers and supporting Stations of the Cross during Lent. Please find materials that Mr Wotherspoon has shared with all staff for Holy Week:

Palm Sunday in Sevilla https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaVCOK6ujuo

Holy Thursday in Italy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU3UfOHvgho

Passion Plays in Sloveniahttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awW6thO5nWo

Greek Orthodox Easterhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZNM4X4lmD4

Please find attached a photo of our pupils who attended the P7/S1 mass at St Mary's Cathedral on Thursday 21st March. Thanks to Madame Jean-Pierre, Mr Wotherspoon, and Ms Luncanu and all of our pupils who attended on behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's RC School.

11. **Supporting a nurturing and positive start to lessons:** Thank you to colleagues for supporting a calm start to all lessons by supporting pupils taking off their jackets, asking pupils to switch off their phones/placing them in bags, and allowing pupils to use the toilet when required.

    SLT will continue to visit toilets to ensure they are being used responsibly, ask pupils to hand phones over if they have them whilst out of classes/on a toilet break, and where needs be communicate this with parents.

12. **2024 Parent surveys:** the parent survey closes this morning at 9.30am and thank you to the 173 parents who have completed the survey (St Thomas of Aquin's uses the HMIe survey for school inspections) https://forms.office.com/e/V7Gj6R9pYz . I will complete an analysis of the 2024 Parent survey and also add in 2023 comparisons. All pupils have a survey to complete as well to hear their voices to support school improvement.

13. **Easter revision sessions:** Please find St Thomas of Aquin's Easter revision sessions attached. Thank you to all colleagues supporting Easter revision.

14. **School dates for April, May, and June**: Please find approximate dates

Date	Year group	Action

Thurs18 April	S5	P6 assembly and leave for exam leave
Thurs18 April	S4	P7 assembly and leave for exam leave
Friday 19 April	S6	9am-10.15 last day event tbc with PSLs
Friday 19 April	S4/5	Exam leave
Monday 22 April	S6	Exam leave
Monday 29 April to Friday 24 May	S4 and ASN S5/6 only	Meaningful May programme
Tuesday 21 May	New S2, S3 and S4	new timetable starts
Friday 31 May	S4-5 (old)	Exam leave ends
Monday 3 June	S5 (new)	retreat day
Tuesday 4 June	S5 (new)	New TT starts
Monday 3 June to Wednesday 5 June inclusive	S6 (new)	Induction days
Thursday 6 June	S6 (new)	New TT starts

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 18 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 18th March

1. **Congratulations**: Congratulations to eight of our S6 pupils who graduated from the Career Ready programme. The two year course involved several masterclasses and a four-week summer internship in

June 2023. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the summer internship experience with some of them leading presentations to their chosen company senior management team. A fantastic achievement and one they should all be proud of.

- Tavish Hamer
- Emily Munro
- Luke McLusky
- Charlie Cook
- Shahd Salama
- Amna Shahzad
- Sarah Smith
- Heather McCudden

2. **2024 Parent surveys – so far we have 85 responses – thank you:** Please find the link for the March 2024 Parent survey (St Thomas of Aquin's uses the HMIe survey for school inspections) https://forms.office.com/e/V7Gj6R9pYz and the QR code below. The survey is open from **Monday 11th to Monday 25th March**. So far we have 85 responses and I am hoping we can get close to or overtake the 189 responses from last year.

   Please take time to read the February updated school improvement plan on the school website (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/) and the "you asked, we are doing" sections to support your understanding of how your voices are central in improving St Thomas of Aquin's.



3. **Easter revision sessions:** Please find St Thomas of Aquin's Easter revision sessions attached.

4. **Spring Concert:** St Thomas of Aquin's Music concert will take place on **21st March** in the main hall from 7.00pm – whether you have a child performing or not it is great evening to experience – please save the date and come and listen to our great pupils.

5. **P7/S1 Transition Mass**: St Thomas of Aquin's staff and pupils will be taking part in the P7/S1 Transition Mass on Thursday 21st March at St Mary's Cathedral from 11.00am.

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's are running a collection for St Catharine's Homeless Project** (please see Donations poster) **for Lent** and would greatly appreciate any donations of non-perishable foods, in particular:

- Tins of soup
- Tins of tuna
- Pot noodles
- Biscuits
- Crisps
- Grated cheese

7. **St Thomas of Aquin's Film Festival**: Please take time to read and chat with your children regarding the S6 Leadership Team's Film Festival. I do hope we have lots of entries.

8. **S4-S5 SQA exams**: The final day at St Thomas of Aquin's S4 and S5 pupils will be **Thursday 18th April,** and Ms Mariani will plan Assemblies for both year groups on Thursday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

   S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on **Friday 18th April**. **S6 pupils** will be allowed into school from **9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team**. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

1. **All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform**: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
2. **All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner** which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
3. **I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building**. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
4. **I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school** and how they conduct themselves in the school building.

   In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2023-24 S6 year group – who have been a great year group at the school we all love.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 11 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 11th March: The Parent Council meets this week, please see details from the PC Chairs.

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's are running a collection for St Catherine's Homeless Project** (please see Donations poster) **for Lent** and would greatly appreciate any donations of non-perishable foods, in particular:

- Tins of soup
- Tins of tuna
- Pot noodles
- Biscuits
- Crisps
- Grated cheese

7. **Duke of Edinburgh support**: Next session, 2024-25, St Thomas of Aquin's will be running its Gold and Silver Duke of Edinburgh awards with the support of external colleagues and I am very grateful for Mrs Rocke setting this up and for our colleagues support. I have staff to volunteer to run our Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award for session 2025 and I am hopeful we can find a colleague to take on this temporary post whilst Mrs Rocke is on maternity leave.

8. **2024 Parent surveys:** Please find the link for the March 2024 Parent surveyhttps://forms.office.com/e/V7Gj6R9pYz and the QR code below. The survey is open from **Monday 11th to Monday 25th March**.

   Please take time to read the February updated school improvement plan attached and the "you asked, we are doing" sections to support your understanding of how your voices are central in improving St Thomas of Aquin's.



9. **Spring Concert:** St Thomas of Aquin's Music concert will take place on **Thursday 21st March** in the main hall from 7.00pm – whether you have a child performing or not it is great evening to experience – please save the date and come and listen to our great pupils.

10. **St Thomas of Aquin's Film Festival**: Please take time to read and chat with your children regarding the S6 Leadership Team's Film Festival. I do hope we have lots of entries.

11. **S4-S5 SQA exams**: The final day at St Thomas of Aquin's S4 and S5 pupils will be **Thursday 18th April,** and Ms Mariani will plan Assemblies for both year groups on Thursday afternoon. I wish all S4 and S5 pupils the very best with their SQA exams.

    S6 pupils will have a Leavers Assembly on **Friday 18th April**. **S6 pupils** will be allowed into school from **9.00-10.00am for an assembly led by Ms Mariani, The S6 Leadership Team, and the Pupil Support Team**. I am asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

5. **All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform**: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
6. **All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner** which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
7. **I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building**. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
8. **I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school** and how they conduct themselves in the school building.

   In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to inappropriate and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with our 2023-24 S6 year group – who have been a great year group at the school we all love.

12. **Senior Awards date change:** To support S6 attendance at the Senior Awards Ceremony I would like to move the date from Thursday 13th June to **Thursday 30th May**. I will reconvene the SNC for discussion.

13. **S4 and S5 Work experience:** We have had a great response so far with pupils returning their self-found placement forms. If your child has yet to submit their form could they please do so by the end of March. All details have been sent to parents and pupils also have this information on their MS Teams. If you or your child have any questions please contact Mr Rafferty

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 4 MARCH

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 4th March - a huge thanks to Madame Jean-Pierre, Mrs Hastings, and the Equalities Team for a great Culture day last week.

1. **Congratulations**: To Alice Perry and Kianna Coertze who competed in the finals of the Scottish Schools Championships (Friday 23rd February) in East Kilbride. Kianna Coertze won gold in the 100 metre backstroke final and Alice Perry won silver in the 200 metre freestyle final and was fourth in the 400 metre freestyle final.

Congratulations to Rudy Walker in S6 for being shortlisted for the Young Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction. This was is a huge achievement as only 13 people in his age group were shortlisted from the whole of the UK. https://www.walterscottprize.co.uk/the-ywsp-shortlist-is-out/ Well done Rudy!

2. **S5-6 coursing**: Senior coursing will start in the first week of March and I have held S4 and S5 coursing assemblies to support pupils' understanding of St Thomas of Aquin's curriculum offer. The coursing sheets can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

3. **Pupils, parents, and staff 2024 surveys:** During the months of March, April, and May I will commence surveying the school community to support our school improvement agenda. Please take time to read the updated school improvement plan and the "you asked, we are doing" sections to support your understanding of how your voices are central in improving St Thomas of Aquin's: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Nov-2023-24-School-Improvement-Plan-Update.pdf

4. **S4 Parents Evening:** S4 Parents Evening will take place on Thursday 7th March from 5-7pm.

5. **Spring Concert:** St Thomas of Aquin's Music concert will take place on Thursday 21st March in the main hall from 7.00pm – whether you have a child performing or not it is great evening to experience – please save the date and come and listen to our great pupils.

6. **Inclusion engagement opportunities:** Please find information regarding CEC Inclusion engagement opportunities.

MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 26th February.

1. **Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Assemblies:** Ms Mariani supported all year groups last week with a presentation on St Thomas Learns' policy. St Thomas of Aquin's will be using the 6 stage lesson planning process for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-LTA-policy.pdf

2. **S4-6 Tracking:** S4-6 Tracking started on Monday 19th February and will be completed by Friday 1st March. We are hoping to get these Tracking Reports to pupils and parents week beginning Monday 11th March.

3. **S5-6 coursing**: Please find March S5-6 coursing sheet for the 2024-25 timetable. Senior coursing will start in the first week of March and I will hold S4 and S5 assemblies next week on Wednesday 28th February Lesson 3 (9.40-9.55 and 10.00-10.15). The coursing sheets will be added to the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

4. **St Thomas of Aquin's Culture Day**: I am hoping Thursday's S6 Equalities Team Culture Day is a great success. Thank you to Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs Hastings for all their support.

5. **St Thomas of Aquin's self-evaluation of Learning, Teaching, and Assessment**: On Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March, Ms Mariani will be supported by Mrs Lyon (QIEO) and some CEC HTs self-evaluating our Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. This will involve Learning Observations for all colleagues, pupil voice meetings, and staff voice meetings.

6. **Pupils, parents, and staff 2024 surveys:** During the months of March, April, and May I will commence surveying the school community to support our school improvement agenda. Please take time to read the updated school improvement plan and the "you asked, we are doing" sections to support your understanding of how your voices are central in improving St Thomas of Aquin's: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Nov-2023-24-School-Improvement-Plan-Update.pdf

7. **Your library, your say:** An engagement and consultation process is currently being carried out to gather views and feedback on service provision. This will help shape a new strategy for Edinburgh's libraries and inform future proposals for change. Between the 26th of January and 19th of April we're asking you to get involved in this first stage by having your say and helping us to shape a new plan that will ensure the library service is sustainable and fit for the future. More information and link to the online questionnaire can be found at https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/futurelibraries

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 19 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 19th February. I am looking forward to speaking with S5 and S6 Parents on Tuesday 20th February at Parents' Evening (5-7pm).

1. **S5-6 coursing**: Please find attached the S5-6 coursing sheet for the 2024-25 timetable. Senior coursing will start in the first week of March. The coursing sheets will be added to the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

2. **S6 Photos: Tuesday 20th February**: S6 Photos will take place in the school hall from 9.00am on Tuesday 20th February. All S6 pupils are to be in full school uniform.

3. **S6 Retreat:** All S6 pupils will be experiencing a S6 retreat on Friday 23rd February. Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon and Ms Luncanu for organising this event.

4. **St Thomas of Aquin's Culture Day**: The S6 Equalities Team are planning a Culture Day on 29th February. More information will be shared about this event later on during the week.

5. **St Thomas of Aquin's have come 4th place for Digital Day**: St Thomas of Aquin's came 4th in the 2023 Digital Day competition! With over 200 schools and 12000 students eager to test their digital skills in the whole of the UK, St Thomas's is the only Scottish school who made it into the finals. We were very impressed with our pupils Moksh, Aidan, Alex, Olivia and Mat who worked with Lloyds Banking Group to come up with a digital idea for a cinema chain.

   We can't wait for 2024's Digital Day coming up for our new S3's on the 13th November.

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's self-evaluation of Learning, Teaching, and Assessment**: On Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March, Ms Mariani will be supported by Mrs Lyon (QIEO) and some CEC HTs self-evaluating our Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. This will involve Learning Observations, pupil voice meetings, and staff voice meetings.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 5th February.

I wish you all an enjoyable February break (Monday 12th to Friday 16th February) and welcome all staff and pupils back on Monday 19th February.

1. **S3 Coursing:** S3 pupils will complete their S4 course choices, details can be found on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/ .

   S3 into S4 personalisation link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xMJJY4zGCEBCtUuQuBqM_YJURTZJWFpJU01FNlM4QVk2TFk4NDNGTldDUS4u

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Active School clubs:** With prelims now completed Active school clubs have returned – please refer to the attached booklet.

3. **Uniform:** The SLT will continue to support all pupils wearing full uniform to school: a white shirt, school tie, school branded Hoodie or jumper or a plain black jumper, trousers/skirts, and black shoes. Pupils should not be wearing "joggers" or " leggings" to school.

4. **S6 Retreat:** All S6 pupils will be experiencing an S6 retreat on Friday 23rd February.

5. **St Thomas of Aquin's self-evaluation of Learning, Teaching, and Assessment**: On Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March, Ms Mariani will be supported by Mrs Lyon (QIEO) and some CEC HTs self-evaluating our Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. This will involve Learning Observations, pupil voice meetings, and staff voice meetings.

Regards
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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

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MONDAY 29 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 29th January

1. **Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquins:**. Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Luncanu, Ms Patrick, and Mr Kennedy for supporting our Feast day activities on Friday.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking Reports and Learner conversations**: S1-S3 pupils received their Tracking Reports on Friday 26th and staff are completing Learner Conversations with pupils which parents can look via their children's iPads.

3. **S2 Coursing:** S2 pupils will complete their coursing on Friday 26th of January. This week S3 pupils will start their S4 course choices with details found on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/

4. **Prelims:** The 2nd week of prelims start on Monday 29th January and I wish all S4-S6 pupils the very best.

5. **Uniform:** This week members of the SLT will be supporting S1, S2, and S3 pupils in wearing full uniform to school: a white shirt, school tie, school branded Hoodie or jumper or a plain black jumper, trousers/skirts, and black shoes. Pupils should not be wearing "joggers" or " leggings" to school.

Regards
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

MONDAY 22 JANUARY

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 22nd January – good luck to all pupils sitting their prelims this week!

1. **S2 into S3 coursing**: S2 pupils have started their 2 week coursing window (Monday 15th January – Friday 26th January): Coursing information can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/.

2. **Congratulations**: Congratulations to the S6 Leadership Team, especially Mara Boxall, along with Mr Kennedy and our school choir for raising £542 for Edinburgh Children's Hospital charity outside the Dome restaurant in December – Well done St Thomas of Aquin's.

3. **Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquinas:** The plan for the Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquins **(Friday 26th January)** is to have S1 and S3 pupils attend Mass at 9.15am in The Sacred Heart – Mr Wotherspoon will be in touch regarding the plan for this and for an S2 assembly later on during the day. Ms Luncanu and Mrs Ritchie will be supporting The S6 Caritas Group with a plan to ensure all pupils in school on Friday receive an ice-cream during break 😊

4. **Senior Phase Career Fair:** St Thomas of Aquin's will be holding a Careers Fair on Friday 9th February: Thanks to Ms Mariani, Mr Rafferty, and Mr Young for planning this event for our pupils

- S6 – 10:50 until 11:20
- S4 – 11:30 until 12:00
- S5 – 12:10 until 12:40

5. **Attendance summary:**

Week	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
7/Jan/24 - 13/Jan/24	93.53%	93.48%	93.57%	91.65%	94.18%	92.20%	93.13%

6. **Safer internet day 2024 is on the 6th of February**. This year the focus is on - Inspiring change? Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online. We will be celebrating this in school on the 6th February.

7. **S5-S6 Parents Evening**: a reminder that S5-6 Parents Evening will now take place on Tuesday 20th February

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 15 JANUARY

Good afternoon to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 15th January.

1. **S2 into S3 coursing**: S2 pupils will start their 2 week coursing window from Monday 15th January: Coursing documents and information booklets can be found here on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/. Madame Jean-Pierre will have already contacted you with personalisation and choice details.

2. **Prelims**: S4-S6 Prelims will start on Monday 22nd January and continue until Friday 2nd February: A copy of the prelim timetable can be found in reception for all S4-S6 pupils - I have attached this for your perusal.

3. **S5-S6 Parents Evening**: a reminder that S5-6 parents evening will now take place on Tuesday 20th February

4. **Parent Homestudy survey analysis – December 2023**: Please find the link to the Homestudy survey analysis on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Draft-Homestudy-Survey-S1-S6-2023-Parent-Survey-Analysis.pdf. Ms Stalker has created a short video to support parents with accessing: https://youtu.be/rUMtn0kINB8

5. **The school Improvement Plan**: the November School Improvement Plan update can be found on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Nov-2023-24-School-Improvement-Plan-Update.pdf. In this update Parents can read a "you asked…we are doing" section which takes analysis from the 2023 parent surveys (found here on the school

website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/) and supports the improvements we have put in place. There is still more to do, however I hope you can see that stakeholder voices are supporting the improvement agenda of the school.

I will be liaising with Pupils and Staff in January and February regarding their March 2023 surveys returns and how the school improvement plan has supported their opinions.

6. **SLT Remits**: Please find attached the updated SLT remits starting from January 2024 – we look forward to welcoming Senior Development Officer Ms Philippa Hastings this week.

7. **Parent Council Burns Ceilidh Friday 26th of January**: Hello and Happy New Year for 2024! Now that school is back open, we are getting in touch with details of the upcoming Burns Ceilidh on **Friday, 26th January**, from **7 to 9.30 pm**, which **will be in the school.** Tickets cost **£5 per person** with a 25% discount for purchases of 4 or more tickets (to provide a family discount). Kids are welcome; however, all under 18s need at least one adult with them please. There will be some Rabbie Burns entertainment, Ceilidh dancing and nibbles included.

   A bar will be available on the night too (with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks for sale). Full details are on the GoodHub page where you can buy tickets - https://app.goodhub.com/sttamsceilidh . Please come along for what will be a fun evening. Feel free to invite friends and family along too; the more, the merrier! If anyone would like to help organise or run the event on the night, please join the fundraising page in the PC WhatsApp group https://chat.whatsapp.com/JWojDfGjfUcJZc42l0swtM
   We hope to see you at the event.
   Wishing you a smashing 2024! Fiona and Eva (co-chairs)
   St. Thomas of Aquin's High School Parent Council
   All parents welcome

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 8 JANUARY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High

Happy New Year and welcome back to St Thomas of Aquin's – we are looking forward to seeing all of our pupils, in full school uniform, tomorrow Tuesday 9th January.

1. **Parent Home study survey analysis – December 2023**: Please find the Home study parent survey analysis which will be a main discussion point at the next Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 23rd January

2. **Prelims**: S4-S6 pupils will start their prelim examinations from Monday 22nd of January

3. **S1-S3 Tracking**: Over the next 2 weeks Teachers will be completing a 2nd Tracking report for S1-S3 pupils. Reports should be with pupils and parents by the week beginning Monday 5th of February.

4. **A consistency at St Thomas of Aquin's:** In 2024 the school will focus on developing a consistent approach to the first 10 minutes of all of our lessons at St Thomas of Aquin's – supporting a nurtured child-centred start to lessons along with our high standards of

- Coats off and full uniform on
- Mobile Phones in school bags
- Ready for learning – iPads charged and homestudy completed
- Minimal use of toilets, especially after break and lunchtime.

Can I ask parents to support us with this focus

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the final HT briefing for 2023 (I will send out the Homestudy survey analysis for Christmas Holiday reading 😊). On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas.

1. **St Thomas of Aquin's attainment success**: Congratulations to all pupils, staff, and parents - St Thomas of Aquin's placed 19th out of 100 in The Times Parent Power Schools Guide for attainment (Top 100 state schools in Scotland). St Thomas of Aquin's prides itself in supporting the holistic

education of all of our pupils and although league tables are not a true reflection of the performance of a school, this very good placing exemplifies a school community working in partnership to get it right for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

2. **A consistency at St Thomas of Aquin's:** In 2024 the school will focus on developing a consistent approach to the first 10 minutes of all of our lessons at St Thomas of Aquin's – supporting a nurtured child-centred start to lessons along with our high standards of

- Coats off and full uniform on
- Mobile Phones in school bags
- Ready for learning – iPads charged and homestudy completed
- Minimal use of toilets

I will be asking parents to support us with this development

4. **Christmas concert:** I would like congratulate and thank Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, our Music Specialists, and our amazing pupils for a superb Christmas Concert on Thursday 14th December in Central Halls. I was mesmerised from start to finish and I am so proud of the school community that we are all part of.

6. **Pupil Ceilidhs:** During this week, the school has 2 Ceilidhs planned. S5 and S6 ceilidh will take place on Monday 18th December (7-9pm) and the S1 and S2 ceilidh will take place on Wednesday 20th December (5-7pm). Thank you to the staff and pupils who have supported with planning these events.

5. **Final day of the term:** St Thomas of Aquin's will close at 12.00 noon on Friday 22nd December with staggered assemblies. There will be food available from the canteen up until 1pm.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 11 DECEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 11th December.

1. **A consistency at St Thomas of Aquin's:** The Leadership of Change agenda for Wednesday 20th December (a meeting with all Senior Leadership Team, Curricular Leaders, and Support Leaders) will focus on developing a consistent approach to the first 10 minutes of all of our lessons at St Thomas of Aquin's – supporting a nurtured child-centred start to lessons along with our high standards of

- Coats off and full uniform on
- Mobile Phones in school bags
- Ready for learning – iPads charged and homestudy completed
- Minimal use of toilets

You may wish to part-take in the homestudy I have set the Leadership Team and watch the following 2 short films by Dr Bruce Perry: I would like thank St Thomas of Aquin's parents in sharing these excellent resources with me.

Episode 1: Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators--The Neurosequential Model https://youtu.be/_3is_3XHKKs

Episode 2: Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators--How Stress Impacts the Brain https://youtu.be/COMwI2akgqM

2. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mr Darren Simpson who was the successful candidate at the interviews for the Curricular Leader of Wellbeing on Friday 8th December. I am very pleased to announce that our Senior Development Officer, Philippa Hastings, will start at St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday 8th January. Congratulations to Ms Lucy McVicar who was the successful candidate for the permanent Business Education post at James Gillespies High School.

4. **Christmas concert – Thursday 14th December in Central Halls:**

We are really looking forward to having our Christmas Concert at the Central Halls Tollcross this year. This bigger venue will allow us to include pupils from our associated primary schools .We hope you understand that ticket prices are a little more this year to reflect the cost of hiring Central Halls.
Ticket prices are as follows and can be purchased on the school ParentPay account:

- Adult £10
- Child U/16, OAP, Unemployed £5
- Family (2 x adults, 2 x children) £25

- More tickets will be released on the night to allow parents (including those from the primary schools) to purchase tickets on the door. Cash or Card will be accepted on the night.

4. **S4-S6 full reports:** S4-S6 Full reports were completed on Friday 8th December. We hope to have all reports quality assured and printed for senior pupils to receive them in the last week of term.

5. **Homestudy survey:** We have around 148 returns to St Thomas of Aquin's Homestudy survey. Thank you for your support in taking time to complete the survey. I believe we have one more week before the survey closes and it would be great hear from more S4, S5, and S6 parents: https://forms.office.com/e/jT9KtAbu6g

6. **Pupil Ceilidhs:** During the last week of term, the school has 2 Ceilidhs planned. S5 and S6 Ceilidh will take place on Monday 18th December (7-9pm)and the S1 and S2 Ceilidh will take place on Wednesday 20th December (5-7pm). Thank you to the staff and pupils who have supported with planning these events.

5. **Final day of the term:** St Thomas of Aquin's will close at 12.00 noon on Friday 22nd December with staggered assemblies. There will be food available from the canteen up until 1pm.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 4th December.

1. **Staffing:** Interviews for the Curricular Leader of Wellbeing will take place Friday 8th December. I am very pleased to announce that our Senior Development Officer, Philippa Hastings, will start at St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday 8th January.

2. **S1-S2 Lunchtime Sports Club:** Thanks to Alan Reid and the S6 Sports Team for trialling the S1-S2 Sports Club on Thursday lunchtimes. Please see the poster attached.

3. **Christmas concert – Thursday 14th December in Central Halls:**

   We are really looking forward to having our Christmas Concert at the Central Halls Tollcross this year. This bigger venue will allow us to include pupils from our associated primary schools .We hope you understand that ticket prices are a little more this year to reflect the cost of hiring Central Halls.
   Ticket prices are as follows and can be purchased on the school ParentPay account:

- Adult £10
- Child U/16, OAP, Unemployed £5
- Family (2 x adults, 2 x children) £25

- More tickets will be released on the night to allow parents (including those from the primary schools) to purchase tickets on the door. Cash or Card will be accepted on the night.

4. **S4-S6 full reports:** S4-S6 full reports will be completed on Friday 8th December. We hope to have all reports quality assured and printed for senior pupils to receive them in the last week of term.

5. **Final day of the term:** St Thomas of Aquin's will close at 12.00 noon on Friday 22nd December with staggered assemblies. There will be food available from the canteen up until 1pm.

6. **S5-S6 Parents Evening 2024 – a change of date:** At the November Parent Council meeting a very good point was raised regarding the date of the S5-6 Parents Evening and how impactful it was to have the date 2 weeks before the end of the term. The S5-6 Parents Evening date has now been changed to Tuesday the 20th February 2024. I have asked the school office to amend the school calendar.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 27th November. Please find the S2 coursing information presentation shared with parents on Thursday 23rd November.

1. **Staffing:** Interviews for the Curricular Leader of Wellbeing will take place Friday 8th December.

2. **Christmas concert – Thursday 14th December in Central Halls – Save the date**: St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas Concert at the Central Halls this year. Please save the date – Thursday 14th December from 7-9pm.

3. **Home study:** An area I am keen to understand more about is the time that pupils are given to complete Homestudy and support colleagues give to pupils to make this meaningful piece of study as accessible as possible. I have asked all Faculties to place this theme on their next Faculty Meetings agenda. I look forward to the January Parent Council meeting to here from Parents regarding Homestudy.

4. **School Improvement planning:** Please find attached the November update of the school improvement plan.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 20th November:

5. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mr Whyte and Mrs Ross who will be the Acting Curricular Leaders of Maths from Monday 27th November. An advert for the permanent Curricular Leader of Wellbeing has closed and interviews will take place in December. I will ask the Chair of the Parent Council for a parent to attend the interviews.

6. **Christmas concert – Thursday 14th December in Central Halls – Save the date**: Ms Patrick is organising St Thomas of Aquin's Christmas Concert at the Central Halls this year. Please save the date – Thursday 14th December from 7-9pm.

7. **Home study:** At the Parent Council last week we decided to discuss Homestudy at the next Parent Council meeting in January. An area I am keen to understand more about is the time that pupils are given to complete homestudy and support colleagues to give pupils to make this meaningful as well as accessible. I will place this on the Leadership Team meeting for this Thursday

8. **S2 Personalisation and choice information evening**: The MS Teams meeting will take place on Thursday 23rd November from 5.00pm: Click here to join the meeting. Meeting ID: 362 327 453 017. Passcode: Wpjvna

9. **Trauma informed practice:** The Sowing Seeds video will continue to enhance St Thomas of Aquin's understanding of pupils who may have experienced trauma Sowing Seeds: Trauma Informed Practice for Anyone Working with Children and Young People on Vimeo.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 13 NOVEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 13th November.

1. **Staffing:** An advert for the permanent Curricular Leader of Wellbeing is now live and will close on the 15th November.

2. **S2 Parents Evening:** Thanks to all staff, parents, the parent council, and the S6 leadership team in making the S2 Parents Evenings a very positive 2-day experience. The S2 Information Personalisation and Choice presentation will take place on 23rd November from 5-6pm on MS Teams. Madame Jean-Pierre will send out details of this information evening in due course.

3. **Events**: The Feast Day of St Margarets will take place on Thursday 16th November as well as S1 pupils going on a cinema trip. An S3-S4 Dodgeball tournament will take place on Friday 17th November in the main gym hall after school led by our S6 Sports Captains. On Thursday 30th November, the school will celebrate St Andrews Day and I believe the S6 Leadership Team are organising a treat for all pupils 😊.

4. **School and Faculty Improvement plans:** The Senior Leadership Team and all Faculties will be updating their plans. I will send parents a copy of the updated School Improvement Plan by the end of November.

5. **2024-25 Timetable:** During November the process for the 2024-25 Timetable will start. I will be meeting with all Faculties to discuss the school curriculum.

   St Thomas of Aquin's curriculum policy can be found here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-Policy-Updated-Jan-2022.pdf

6. **Parent Council meeting**: The 2nd Parent Council meeting will take place this Thursday 16th November, from 6.30pm. The meeting will be held in The Modern Language Faculty.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER

Good afternoon parents of St Thomas of Aquins

Please find the parent briefing for week beginning Monday 6th November:

Planned Industrial Action for Wednesday 8th November has been postponed: Please refer to the attached letter
All S1-S6 pupils should come to school in full school uniform on Wednesday 8th November.

2. **Staffing:** Interviews for the Acting Curricular Leader of Maths and Numeracy will take place on Thursday 9th November. An advert for the permanent Curricular Leader of Wellbeing is now live and will close on the 15th November.

7. **S2 Parents Evening:** S2 Parents Evenings will take place on Monday 6th November and Tuesday 7th November. The S2 Information Personalisation and Choice presentation will take place on 23rd November from 5-6pm on MS Teams. Madame Jean-Pierre will send out details of this information evening in due course.

3. **School and Faculty Improvement plans:** The Senior Leadership Team and all Faculties will be updating their plans. I will send parents a copy of the updated School Improvement Plan by the end of November.

3. **2024-25 Timetable:** During November the process for the 2024-25 Timetable will start. I will be meeting with all Faculties to discuss the school curriculum.

   St Thomas of Aquin's curriculum policy can be found here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-Policy-Updated-Jan-2022.pdf

Regards
Christopher Santini

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DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARDS SCOTLAND

MONDAY 30 OCTOBER

Good morning parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 30th October – I have been tweeting? Or x-ing? about 3 new school clubs that have started after the October break – a Rubik's cube club on Wednesday lunch time; an Italian language and culture club on Thursday lunchtime; and a school magazine club on Wednesday lunchtime – thank you to all the staff supporting your children with these clubs.

1. **Support with uniform in Key Adult Classes:** Please can parents continue to support the school with pupils wearing full school uniform to school. Pupils should be wearing school trousers or skirts to school, can I ask pupils not to wear "joggers" or just "leggings" to school.

2. **S2 Parents Evening:** S2 Parents Evenings will take place on the week beginning Monday 6th of November: Monday 6th November and Tuesday 7th November.

3. **Staffing**: The Acting Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy advert will close on Monday 30th October.

4. **Sustainability survey**: Please find a Connect parent survey (Connect is a registered charity helping parents and carers to be involved and engaged in children's learning and school life): Parent/Carer Survey on Learning for Sustainability

4. **Congratulations Gold Duke of Edinburgh pupils**: Andrew Oloju, Kirstin Riach, Ruhika Viralam, Emily Kidd, Natalie Lesniowolska, Stephanie Okeke and thanks to Mrs Rocke and our Gold DofE assessors for all of their support.

5. **2023 March Pupil Survey updates**: During November I will be working on the March 2023 survey returns from pupils with a focus on the following questions.

- **Q13.** I have the opportunity to discuss my achievements out with school with an adult in the school who knows me. 147/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q14**. My school listens to my views:172/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q15.** My school takes my views into account: 215/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q16**. My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school. 167/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q17.** I was given good advice to make choices about taking subjects that are right for me. 151/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q21.** I enjoy learning at school. 131/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know.
- **Q28.** My school deals well with any bullying. 222/424 pupils disagreed/strongly disagreed/Did not know. (116 pupils stated Don't know)

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's November Chaplaincy news**: Please find attached an update from the Chaplaincy Team.

Regards

Christopher

Christopher Santini

MONDAY 16 OCTOBER

Good afternoon to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parent briefing for the week of The October holiday: a reminder that all pupils return to school on Tuesday 24th October.

1. **Staffing**: This is the last week Ms Davies Bogert will be working at St Thomas of Aquin's before she moves to another High School on Monday 16th October. I would like to thank Ms Davies-Bogert for all of her work and support of pupils and colleagues in her roles at St Thomas of Aquin's.

2. **November S4-S6 assessments:** Please find St Thomas of Aquin's November Assessment week which we hope will support S4-S6 pupils achieve their best outcomes in the May 2024 SQA exam diet. January S4-S6 prelims will continue to be part of the pupil assessment experience. Both these assessment experiences support the gathering of pupil evidence throughout the year.

4. **S1 and S2 Halloween Disco (please find the poster attached):** The S6 Leadership Team are organising an S1 and S2 Halloween disco on Monday 30th October from 6.30-8.30pm in the main school hall (Tickets £3). S6 pupils and staff will be present to ensure as an enjoyable experience as possible for pupils and if parents are collecting their children we would appreciate them to be outside the school from 8.20 as we plan to finish promptly. I would like to thank the S6 Leadership Team for planning the event and I know S1 and S2 parents will speak with their children regarding very good behaviour and supporting the clearing up of the main hall afterwards.

   S3-4 Dodgeball tournament: The S6 Leadership Team are organising a Friday afternoon dodgeball event for S3 and S4 pupils on Friday 17th November from 1.30-2.30. Details of how to enter will be forthcoming.

5. **Pupil success**: I am delighted to announce that S6 pupil Heather McCudden was one of 14 highest achieving candidates in the 2023 Modern Studies Higher SQA examination in Scotland. To recognise Heather's achievement the Modern Studies Educational Trust presented Heather with a certificate of achievement, £20 cheque and her name will also be engraved on the trust's Modern Studies trophy. Well done Heather!

6. **St Thomas of Aquin's Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Policy**: Please find attached the newly drafted St Thomas of Aquin's Learning, Teaching, and Assessment policy. This draft will be placed on the school website and Ms Mariani will be in contact with pupils and parents to gather feedback. At the next parent Council meeting, Thursday 16th November, there will be a chance to discuss the policy after an introduction from Ms Mariani.

7. **Key Adult Class bulletins:** Every week Mr Whyte produces an up-to-date Key Adult Class bulletin for pupils to access in Key Adult Classes. Parents can use the following link to access these bulletins on the school website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/ . Thank you Mr Whyte 😊

Regards

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 9 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 9th October. A reminder that the October break starts on Monday 16th October and all pupils will return to school, in full school uniform, on Tuesday 24th October.

On Friday 13th October pupils can wear appropriate non-school uniform clothes to support MacMillan Cancer - donations at Key Adult will be most welcome. Can I please ask all families to continue to support pupils wearing full school uniform to school this week from Monday to Thursday.

1. **You asked, we are doing: Parents**: One of the key pieces of improvement work the school is carrying out is to ensure the voices of parents, pupils, and staff are listened to and then acted upon in the context of a rigorous yet manageable school improvement plan. Please find the You asked for and we are doing updates in terms of Parents. Over the coming months I will update how we are listening to the voices of pupils and staff

Whom	Where	Asked for	We are doing	Evidence
Parents	Parent Surveys	March 2023 Parent survey identified 39% of parents either disagreeing, strongly disagreeing, or not knowing about the school encouraging healthy and regular exercise.	S1- S4 year groups all participate in 2 lessons of Core PE a week. S5 and S6 pupils all participate in 1 lesson of Core PE a week. 2023-24 After School Sports clubs in place and information found on the school website. The school provides all pupils with a Place2be counselling service (Mondays/Tuesdays/Wednesdays).	School Curriculum: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-Policy-Updated-Jan-2022.pdf 2023-24 After school Sports Clubs: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Active-Schools-Club-booklet-23-24.pdf .

				Place2Be: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/place2be/
		March 2023 Parent survey identifies 41% of parents either disagreeing, strongly disagreeing, or not knowing that the school supports their child's wellbeing.	The school places updated course choice information on the school website very year and emails the course choice information out to parents via the HT briefing.	Course choice information: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/
			Course choice information evenings for the Senior Phase and Broad General Education are placed on the school calendar and parents are invited to a MS Teams evening prior to pupil choices. The 2023-24 Senior Phase was been brought forward to September to support parents of senior pupils.	HT briefing updates: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/
		March 2023 Parent survey identifies 37% of parents either disagreeing, strongly disagreeing, or not knowing that their child is supported to make choices about taking the subjects that are right for them.	For S1-S3 parents, the school has shared exemplars of BGE Level 3 and Level 4 pupil work on the school website. Parents and pupils will be able to compare Levels of work being produced.	https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bge/
			S1-S6 Tracking Reports will have a new Leaners Conversations OneNote system in place which will support parents with access to up to date specific feedback based on all Tracking reports	
		March 2023 Parent survey identifies 48% of parents either disagreeing, strongly disagreeing, that the school gives advice on how to support my child's learning at home		
		Areas to work upon during the year: Activities where my		

		child and I can learn. The school taking my views into account.		

2. **Staffing**: The successful candidate for the Senior Development Officer is Ms Philippa Hastings, Curricular Leader of Modern Languages at Forrester High School. I am in communication with the Acting HT regarding a release date.

3. **Curriculum presentation and summary leaflet on the review of qualifications and assessments**: Please find a summary of the Hayward recommendations for the future of Scottish qualifications.

4. **Pupil news:** After a number of trials, with 80+ boys trialling from schools across Edinburgh, S3 Damia Perello Vives and Bertrant Amuseh were selected to be part of the U15s Edinburgh select squad. The boys will compete in the National trophy against other regions within Scotland. If parents wish to share achievement good news regarding their children please do email the school admin with details and we will support with the communication of your child/our pupils' successes.

5. **S1-S3 Tracking and Learner Conversations**: S1-S3 pupils receiving their tracking prior to the October break.

4. **P7 Transition Parents Information MS Teams meeting:** Parents of associated primary schools have been invited to join an MS Teams meeting on **Wednesday 11th October from 5-6pm**.

   Microsoft Teams meeting: Click here to join the meeting
   Meeting ID: 390 365 791 996
   Passcode: wnkz8g

5. **S3 Parents Evening**: S3 Parents Evening takes place on **Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th October from 5-7pm**

Wednesday 25th October	Thursday 26th October
Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology
Computing Science	Religious Education

Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning

6. **Raising children with confidence**: Please find attached the raising children with confidence flyer with a focus on parents and carers emotional wellbeing support classes.

MONDAY 2 OCTOBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 2nd October:

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Ms A Bhatti who is the preferred candidate for the Temporary Biology Teacher for session 2023-24. The shortleet Senior Development Officer interviews will take place on **Tuesday 3rd October**. There are 2 candidates being interviewed for the post.

2. **September Insight attainment data**: Please find the 2023 September Insight attainment data which I will also go over at the next Parent Council meeting on Thursday 16th November. I will place the 2023 Insight attainment document on the school website. I would like to congratulate all pupils, staff, and parents for our very good attainment evidence.

3. **S4-S6 Tracking Reports, S1-S3 Tracking, and Learner Conversations**: S4-S6 pupils received their 1st Tracking reports on Friday 29th September. S1-S3 Tracking window has started and will finish on Friday 6th October with pupils receiving their tracking prior to the October break. All S1-S6 pupils should know the subject level they are working at in their classes.

4. **P7 Transition Parents Information MS Teams meeting:** Parents of associated Primary schools have been invited to join an MS Teams meeting on **Wednesday 11th October from 5-6pm**.

   Microsoft Teams meeting: Click here to join the meeting
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Wednesday 25th October	**Thursday 26th October**
Maths	English
Social Subjects	Science
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts & Technology

Computing Science	Religious Education
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Pupil Support Leaders	Support for Learning

Regards

Christopher Santini

MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquins, please find the plan for virtual learning for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week.

The City of Edinburgh Council update on planned Industrial action: The number of support staff on strike means there will be a blanket school closure by sector to pupils: 26/27/28 September (all primary, secondary, special and early years)

St Thomas of Aquin's virtual learning plan for planned industrial action Tuesday 26th/Wednesday 27th/Thursday 28th of September: a blend of live online and asynchronous digital learning

1. The pupils and staff will follow their Lesson 1-7 timetabled classes for the 3 days using iPads and MS Teams.
2. To support pupils with an online health and wellbeing check we will share the MS Teams function of reflections with pupils which allows them to share with PSLs how they are feeling. Pupils can use reflections at any time of the day.
3. Using our iPads, MS Teams knowledge, and empowered learning expertise, all lessons will have a live 10 minute starter and presentation of learning, independent piece of pupil learning for 25 minutes (the asynchronous part), and a 15 minute Q/A session + plenary.
4. Learning and Development Faculty to check in with identified pupils.
5. If a staff member is absent on any of the identified planned industrial action days, then the Curricular Leader of the Faculty will make contact with the class with cover work.

Staffing: Congratulations to Ms Davies-Bogart who was the successful candidate for an Administration position at James Gillespies High School. Elli has been a great colleague to work with at St Thomas of Aquin's supporting pupils and colleagues in catering and in admin.

Longleet Senior Development Officer interviews will continue tomorrow and I am hoping that short-leet interviews will take place week beginning Monday 2nd October.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

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MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 11th September. Please remember that Monday 18th September is an Edinburgh school holiday with all staff and pupils returning to school on Tuesday 19th September.

1. **Staffing**: An advert for a fixed-term Biology post is live on Myjobscotland until Monday 11th September. Interviews for the Computing Science Teaching position started on Friday 8th September and will finish on Monday 11th. Longleet interviews for the Senior Development Officer's post will take place on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd September. 9 candidates will be interviewed.

2. **S4-6 Tracking:** S4-S6 Tracking 1 window starts this week and runs until Friday 22nd September. Tracking reports should be with pupils and parents by Friday 29th September.

3. **Launch of Study Club**: St Thomas of Aquin's High School will be launching a home study club for all year groups, commencing Tuesday 19th September 2023. The group aims to offer a calm and quiet space for pupils to complete home study tasks with the support of both staff and their peers. Running every Tuesday afternoon between 15.40 and 16.40, we welcome all year groups to room 2.07. The room offers access to computers for learners who require it. This will be a great opportunity for pupils of all subjects and year groups to complete home study tasks, hone their study skills and set themselves up to become successful learners this school year and beyond.

4. **iPad charging:** I am asking Key Adult Teachers to support pupils with the charging of their iPads in Key Adult classes. Can I ask parents to support the charging of their children's iPads at home where possible.

4. **Parent Council meeting:** The first Parent Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday 13th September from 6.30 in room 3.33** (The Modern Languages Faculty).

5. **50-50 club:** Please find attached information about supporting St Thomas of Aquin's fundraising via the 50:50 club

6. **Week beginning Tuesday 19th September:** S1 pupils will be allowed out of the school building at break and lunchtime from Tuesday 19th September.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 4th September:

Please find attached a letter for parents from Amanda Hatton which I sent out on Friday.

5. **Staffing**: Adverts for a permanent Computing Science Teacher and a Senior Development Officer closed on Friday 1st September. An advert for a Fixed-term Biology post is live on Myjobscotland until Monday 11th September.

2. **School clubs**: Please find attached a copy of the afterschool clubs planned for session 2023-24 at St Thomas of Aquin's. This attachment will be placed on the school website in due course.

3. **Pupils uniform and mobile phones**: Thank you to all parents for supporting pupils wearing full school uniform at St Thomas of Aquin's. There a very small number of pupils not in full uniform and I will reach out to parents via a supportive text.
   I am asking parents to support me with pupils going to the toilets with their mobile phones. When I walk around the school, I will be asking pupils to return to classes and place their phones in their bags and then going to the toilet – any support conversation at home with this would be gratefully received.

7. **Senior Phase Information Evening**: An MS Teams Senior Phase meeting for S4-S6 parents will take place on **Tuesday 5th September**. Ms Mariani will be emailing parents with information and an MS Teams link.

   Click here to join the meeting
   Meeting ID: 346 240 096 462
   Passcode: hkpg9w

8. **Parent Council Meeting:** The first Parent Council meeting will take place **Wednesday 13th September from 6.30pm in room 3.33** (The Modern Languages Faculty).

9. **Parents' curry and non-alcohol drinks evening:** This will again take place this year on **Thursday 7th September**. This is an open invitation for **all parents and staff of St Thomas of Aquin's** to come to the school and meet other parents as well as the chance to chat with the Senior Leadership Team and

members of The Parent Council. Please email Admin to register your attendance and your choice of chicken or vegetable curry: Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 28 AUGUST

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 28th August:

I am glad to report that our very successful **parents' curry and non-alcohol drinks evening** will again take place this year on **Thursday 7th September**. This is an open invitation for **all parents of St Thomas of Aquin's** to come to the school on **Thursday 7th September from 6.00 to 8.00pm for a free curry** and meet other parents as well as the chance to chat with the Senior Leadership Team and members of the Parent Council.

Please email Admin to register your attendance and your choice of Chicken or Vegetable curry: Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk

6. **Staffing**: Adverts for a permanent Computing Science Teacher and a Senior Development Officer are live on myjobscotland. Both adverts close on Friday 1st September.

4. **School Improvement:** Please find attached the 2022-23 Standards and Quality Report and the 2023-24 School Improvement Plan. Both of these documents will be placed on the school website this week.

5. **S4-S6 Coursing:** Coursing for S4-6 pupils has now been completed and I wish all senior pupils the very best with their National Qualifications in session 2023-24. Senior pupils will complete all of their subjects at a level which supports their very best attainment and wellbeing. Pupils will be presented for all of their National Qualifications and will not be withdrawn from courses unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Pupils and parents will be able to meet with a Senior Leadership Team member to discuss if a discussion is needed.

6. **Senior Phase Information Evening**: An MS Teams Senior Phase meeting for S4-S6 parents will take place on **Tuesday 5th September**. Ms Mariani will be emailing parents with information and an MS Teams link.

7. **Parent Council meeting:** The first Parent Council meeting will take place **Wednesday 13th September from 6.30 in room 3.33** (The Modern Languages Faculty).

8. **School clubs**: I am hoping to have a lunchtime and afterschool club starting from **Monday 4th September**.

9. **S6 Music Department:** Pupils will shortly receive a letter from the Music department with information regarding the Instruction Programme. If your child is interested in learning one of the instruments listed, please complete the tear-off slip and return it to Ms Patrick by Friday 8th September.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 21 AUGUST

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the first HT parent briefing email of session 2023-24. I would like to thank you all for supporting your children who delivered a very calm start to the school term – it has been great to speak with as many pupils as possible and the uniform, on the whole, has been of a very high standard.

Over the coming weeks I will be sharing with parents information on the school's SQA attainment results, 2023-24 school improvement planning, and the 2022-23 standards and quality report. At the first Parent Council meeting I hope to have some extended time to go over these pieces of information and to answer your questions. I will email parents details of the Parent Council meeting dates in due course.

7. **Staffing**: We will be saying goodbye to 2 staff members in September:
Mrs Zafar has been successful in achieving a Computer Science position in West Lothian College which she will start in mid-September. Mrs Zafar has been a great member of staff and has supported the growth of our digital confidence throughout the last 3 years. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I thank Mrs Zafar for all of her support for our pupils and for her compassionate and nurturing teaching techniques.

Mr Paterson has been a fantastic SSO to work with and like all great colleagues has achieved a new SSO position in a CEC school. Mr Paterson is a colleague who goes above and beyond and his attention to service for others and in delivering on detail will be very much missed. On behalf of St Thomas of Aquin's I thank Mr Paterson for all of his support for the school and I wish him all the best.

10. **School Improvement:** I will be sharing a copy of the 2022-23 Standards and Quality Report and the 2023-24 School Improvement Plan with parents next week. I have been using the pupil and parent survey returns to support your voices being articulated in the improvement of St Thomas of Aquin's during session 2023-24.

3. **SQA Attainment:** Please find attached a summary of the 2022-23 SQA School and Faculty results. You can compare the 2022-23SQA results with previous years' results on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/

4. **BGE Levels and exemplars**: Thanks to the Maths, English, Modern Languages, Social Subjects, and Religious Education Faculties for their BGE Levels and Exemplars. Parents can go on to the school website here (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/) to which I hope will support your understanding with the Levels your children are working at in S1-S3.

5. **Digital Schools Award and S1 iPads:** I am very pleased to report that St Thomas of Aquin's has achieved our Digital Schools Award - a great result for the school.
iPads will be handed out to all S1 pupils on Tuesday afternoon and ICT agreements will need to be signed to continue the school providing all future pupils with the equity of our iPad provision.

6. **S6 Leadership Team**: Congratulations to the 2023-24 S6 Leadership Team who were successfully interviewed in June. I will be meeting with the S6 Leadership Team on a regular basis to support their charity and pupil activity plans. Over the next 2 weeks, interview for Sports Captain, Equalities Captain, and Music & Arts Captains will take place.

- **Head Girl**: Beth Reed Maddy
- **Depute Head Girl**: Mara Boxall

- **Head Boy**: Harry Gray
- **Depute Head Boy**: Tavish Hamer

- **St Margaret's House Captain:** Noah Ducker and Ines Correia Moreira
- **St Andrew's House Captain:** Artemis Kola and Ruby Gordon
- **St Patrick's House Captain:** Katie Accarino and Juliet Marshall.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 26 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

Please find the final HT parent briefing for Monday 26th June: I do wish you and your family a very relaxing summer holiday and I look forward to welcoming all pupils back on Wednesday 16th August to St Thomas of Aquins in full school uniform to start another very successful year.

1. **Staffing:** We will be saying goodbye to a number of colleagues at the end of term:

   Ms J Payne will be leaving St Thomas' at the end of this term. Ms Payne has been a great Graphic Communication Teacher and colleague who has brought so much creativity and support to St Thomas of Aquin's.

   Mrs J Moore will be leaving St Thomas of Aquin's on Tuesday 27th June and I thank her for all of her support of St Thomas of Aquin's pupils in her role as Pupil Support Assistant.

   Ms A Creamer moves from St Thomas of Aquin's to a Midlothian High School on a permanent Science contract and we wish Ms Creamer all the best. Thank you for your 2 years of service.

   Ms K Farrell, English Probationer Teacher, will be leaving us and we wish her all the best.

   Congratulations to Ms K Baxter who has been appointed Fixed-Term Art and Animation Teacher at St Thomas of Aquin's and to Miss E Harley who will be joining the English Faculty on a permanent basis in August.

2. **S6 Leadership:** Ms Stalker, Ms Mariani and I interviewed a very impressive group of S6 candidates on Wednesday 21st of June and the following pupils were successful in the Heads and Deputes roles for session 2023-24:

   Head Girl: Beth Reed Maddy

   Depute Head Girl: Mara Boxall

   Head Boy: Harry Gray

   Depute Head Boy: Tavish Hamer

Interviews for Heads of Houses, Equalities and Sports Captains will take place this week. I will be writing to the parents of successful pupils in August.

3. **P7 3 day visit:** Congratulations to all staff, pupils, and parents for a great 3 day-visit: A special thanks to Madame Jean-Pierre and all the Support Team for their strategic and operational planning.

4. **Last day of term and start of new term:** The last day of term will be on Wednesday 28th June with the school closing at 1.00pm. Pupil Assemblies will start from 12 noon with S5/6 going first, then S3/4 at 12.20, and S1/2 at 12.40. Pupils will be allowed to wear non-uniform clothing.

   All Pupils return to school on Wednesday 16th August in full school uniform. SQA results for our new S5, S6 and Leavers year groups will come out on Tuesday 8th August.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 19 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parental briefing for Monday 19th June (2nd last HT briefing of this session).

5. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Miss Elisha Harley who will be joining the English Faculty on a permanent basis in August. I will be interviewing for a Fixed-term Art and Animation Teacher on Thursday 22nd June.

6. **S6 Leadership:** Please find the draft S6 Leadership remits. Interviews will take place week beginning Monday 19th June.

7. **P7 3 Day visit:** On Tuesday 20th, Wednesday, 21st, and Thursday 22nd, St Thomas of Aquin's welcomes our new S1 pupils. On Thursday 22nd of June we welcome new S1 parents into the school building for an information evening. Please find my Curriculum and Attainment presentation.

8. **Last day of term and start of new term:** The last day of term will be on Wednesday 28th June with the school closing at 1pm. Pupil Assemblies will start from 12 noon with S5/6 going first, then S3/4 at 12.20, and S1/2 at 12.40. Pupils will be allowed to wear non-uniform clothing.

   All Pupils return to school on Wednesday 16th August in full school uniform. SQA results for our new S5, S6 and Leavers year groups will come out on Tuesday 8th August.

9. **Possible Parent Social event:** Last year St Thomas of Aquin's put on a parent social in early September and this was a great success. I am planning, with the Parent Council, to put this on again

   I am working with the school catering team in providing a free curry evening for all parents including our new S1 parents – a possible save the date is Thursday 8th September from 6-8pm.

10. **Parents Mind Well Sessions:** Mind Well sessions provide an opportunity for parents who are caring for a young person with emotional or mental health issues to gain information, support and meet other parents. Information on the upcoming Mind Well sessions are below-

Parents Mind Well -Self Harm
Date: Tuesday the 4th July 2023, 5.30-7.30pm
Venue: VOCAL Edinburgh Carer's Hub, 60 Leith Walk, EH6 5HB
Delivered by Penumbra Edinburgh Self Harm Service
This session aims to increase parent's understanding about Self Harm and offer some practical ways to help young people who may consider or display self-harming behaviour. Please book at
https://www.carerstraining.co.uk/event/parents-mindwell-self-harm-july/

Parents Mind Well- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in children and young people
Date: Friday the 1st of September 2023, 9.30-11.30am
Venue: Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, 5 Moredunvale Place, EH177LB
Delivered by Lisa Esingle (Clinical Associate Psychologist, NHS Lothian) and Clinical Fellow in Psychological Therapies (University of Edinburgh)
This session will focus on how OCD can affect children and young people and consider how parents and other family members can support young people experiencing these difficulties. Please book at https://www.carerstraining.co.uk/event/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd-in-children-and-young-people-sept/

Parents Mind Well- Low Mood and Depression in Teenagers
Date: Thursday the 28th of September 2023, 6.30-8.30pm
Venue: Southside Community Centre, 117 Nicolson Street, EH8 9ER
Delivered by Dr Aliénor Lemieux-Cumberlege, Clinical Psychologist (NHS Lothian) and Career Development Fellow (University of Edinburgh)
This session will focus on how low mood and depression can affect children and young people and consider how parents and other family members can support young people experiencing these difficulties. Please book at
https://www.carerstraining.co.uk/event/low-mood-and-depression-in-teenagers-sept/

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 12 JUNE

Good morning parents, please find the HT briefing for Monday 12th June.

11. **Staffing:** Adverts for a permanent English Teacher and a Temporary Art and Animation Teacher will close on Myjobscotland on Thursday 8th June. Interviews will take place next week from Wednesday 14th June.

12. **Senior S4-S6 Awards Ceremony**: Thank you to Mrs Ritchie, all the Admin staff, SSOs, and staff for their support with the Award Ceremony last week. Thanks to all the parents and pupils for their attendance.

    2022-23 S1, S2 and S3 award assemblies: The 2022-23 S1-S3 assemblies will take place on Monday and Tuesday of week beginning Monday 26th June.

13. **The Big Green Week**: The Climate Action Group has prepared a week of green fun for the school and we have aptly called it "**THE BIG GREEN WEEK**". It will run this week (**Monday 12th till Friday 16th June)**.

14. **2023-24 Parents Evenings**: I can confirm that all S1-S6 Parents' Evenings will now be face to face in the St Thomas of Aquin's main hall from next session onwards.

15. **Possible Parent Social Event:** Last year I put on a parent social in early September and this was a great success. I am planning with the Parent Council to put this on again.

    I am working with the school catering team in providing a free curry evening for all parents including our new S1 parents – a possible save the date is **Thursday 8th September from 6-8pm.**

16. Please find attached a letter from Police Scotland.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 5 JUNE

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 5th June

17. **Staffing:** At the end of term we will be saying farewell to Mrs Jennifer Moore (Pupil Support Assistant). Jennifer's calm and nurturing approach with St Thomas' pupils will be missed. Thank you for your work Jennifer.

    Adverts for a permanent English Teacher and a Temporary Art and Animation Teacher are now live on Myjobscotland.

18. **Senior S4-S6 Awards Ceremony**: St Thomas of Aquin's first S4-S6 Senior Award Ceremony in June will take place tomorrow night in the main hall. Thank you to Mrs Ritchie, all the Admin staff, and staff for their support with this.

19. **2023-24 Parents Evenings**: I can confirm that all S1-S6 Parents' Evenings will now be face to face in the St Thomas of Aquin's main hall from next session onwards.

20. **St Thomas of Aquin's pupils**: I have been informed that a very small amount of St Thomas of Aquin's pupils are entering other Secondary School buildings during breaktime/lunchtime. I will be contacting Parents of identified pupils for their support if this Health and Safety behaviour continues.

21. **Minecraft winners**: St Thomas of Aquin's are absolutely delighted to announce that the sustainability Minecraft challenge results have been announced and **S3 Timon, Misia and Coral** have managed to win **1st place** for CEC secondary submissions. St Thomas of Aquin's are now off to the National Build Championships on the **22nd June** at Abertay university. Please congratulate them all when you see them / wish them luck. The winning piece of work should be able to be viewed here: https://clickv.ie/w/cZqv

22. **Carers week:** *the theme is* Recognising and supporting carers in the community.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 29 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 29th May.

1. **Parent Council AGM:** The last meeting of the Parent Council takes place on Wednesday 31st May at 6.30pm in The Modern Language Faculty room 3.33. I do hope to see as many parents as possible. Please find an updated school improvement planning themes document.

2. **SLT remits:** Please find the draft 2023-24 SLT remits.

   Standards and quality report 2022-23 and school improvement planning 2023-24: The SLT are preparing a draft analysis of last session (the standards and quality report) and a draft school improvement plan. I hope to share both draft documents in mid-June.

3. **Pupil Awards:** Please find a link to the 2023 pupil awards. Thanks to Mrs Ritchie, the school's Business Manager, for leading on this (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Awards-Brochure-22-23.pdf)

4. **End of 2023 SQA exams**: The final day for the 2023 SQA exams will be on Wednesday 31st May and this means that Senior Pupils (New S5 and S6 pupils) will be returning to school on Monday 5th June. The new timetable for S2, S3, and S4 pupils has already started and this has supported pupils and staff. There will be an S5 and S6 induction experience and Ms Mariani will be communicating with senior pupils this week about plans.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 22 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

5. **SLT remits and meetings**: I have been meeting with all SLT members last week to discuss our remits and how SLT strategically meet and plan for school improvement. I will update colleagues and parents with amended SLT remits by the end of May and will speak of the SLT remits at the Parent Council AGM on the 31st May.

6. **Staffing:**. The Acting Pupil Support Leader interviews took place on Friday 19th May and I am very pleased to announce that Mr L Murray is the successful candidate. This week St Thomas of Aquin's is saying goodbye to Ms L O'Donnell, I would like to thank Ms O' Donnell for all of her work and support of pupils in the English Faculty and I wish her the very best at her new school.

7. **The Big Green Week**: The Climate Action Group will be organising a very thoughtful and interactive environmental focussed climate action week starting on Monday 12th June. Thanks to Dr Bogomazova and the CAG for this – we are looking forward to your plans.

8. **2023-24 Timetable and final S1-S3 Tracking:** On Tuesday 23rd May, **the 2023-24 timetable** will commence. This means that all year groups move up a year and the **new** S4 pupils can start their National Qualification work 2 weeks earlier…I am sure they will thank us for this.

   The 2023 SQA exams finish on Wednesday 31st May and all **new** S5 and S6 pupils (including the senior pupils experiencing some of our Meaning May lessons) return to school on Monday 5th June.

   The last S1-S3 Tacking **(this is the 2022-23 year groups)** will take place from the 23rd May through to the 2nd June.

9. **Parent Support S4-S6 iPad returns:** If you child is leaving St Thomas of Aquin's this term it is essential that they return their iPad, iPad charger, and box in excellent condition so the new S1 pupils have these in place to receive in August. All pupils leaving St Thomas must have their iPads returned to St Thomas no later than Wednesday 31st May. The cost of iPads are significant to a school and to ensure that we have a seamless rolling programme of iPads handed over to our new S1 pupils it is essential that Parents support us to get it right for all our pupils. Please can S4, S5, and S6 pupils leaving St Thomas of Aquin's hand in their Ipads, chargers, and iPad boxes after their last exam at reception and wait for Admin colleagues to take their names and year group from our lists so we do not contact further. Thank you in advance for this support

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

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Self-Discipline
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Success

MONDAY 15 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for Monday 15th May. We are now over 2 weeks into the SQA Exam timetable and I do hope your children are manging the balance of revision, exam experience, and wellbeing rest. When I see the senior pupils I am wishing them the very best and on the whole they are telling me the exams have been fair assessments.

10. **SLT remits and meetings**: I am meeting with all SLT members this week to discuss our remits and how SLT strategically meet and plan for school improvement. I will update colleagues and parents with amended SLT remits by the end of May and will speak of the SLT remits at the Parent Council AGM on the 31st May.

11. **S1-S3 Assemblies:** I would like to meet S1-S3 year groups this week and I am sharing with you a draft Assembly presentation.

12. **Staffing:**. The Acting Pupil Support Leader interviews will take place on Friday 19th May.

13. **2023-24 Timetable and final S1-S3 Tracking:** On Tuesday 23rd May, the 2023-24 timetable will commence. This is a huge annual undertaking and I would like to thank Karen Statham and Steff Grey for all of their work in inputting the significant data into our Seemis system.

    The last S1-S3 Tacking will take place from the 23rd May through to the 2nd June. SLT will be discussing how best to make this 4th S1-S3 Tracking support pupils who have now moved up year groups.

3. **BrBlBb pupil and staff consultation:** thanks to Miss Whiffen for completing the updated draft BrBbBl policy, the next steps are for the policy to be discussed in PSE Lessons so all pupils are aware and for parents to be able to contribute their thoughts at a future PC meeting. Please find attached.

4. **Parent Support S4-S6 iPad returns:** If you child is leaving St Thomas of Aquin's this term it is essential that they return their iPad, iPad charger, and box in excellent condition so the new S1 pupils

have these in place to receive in August. All pupils leaving St Thomas must have their iPads returned to St Thomas no later than Wednesday 31st May. The cost of iPads are significant to a school and to ensure that we have a seamless rolling programme of iPads handed over to our new S1 pupils it is essential that Parents support us to get it right for all our pupils. Please can S4, S5, and S6 pupils leaving St Thomas of Aquin's hand in their Ipads, chargers, and iPad boxes after their last exam at reception and wait for Admin colleagues to take their names and year group from our lists so we do not contact further. Thank you in advance for this support

5. **Return of books to Faculties**: Many Faculties have lent pupils resources to support their studies during exams. Your support in encouraging your children to return books and other resources to Faculties would be greatly appreciated. This would allow other pupils to start their new courses promptly.

   Free books!...Quite a number of our S1 and S2 pupils have now been given library cards which allows them access to the Libby app on their iPads and other devices. The Libby app will give them access to thousands of free e-books and audiobooks. For your child to access this fantastic resource, our school librarians need **active consent** from you which would allow them to issue your child with a library card. They can also reactivate any cards pupils may already have. To give active consent can you please fill in the form below. https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xKB-HALiGfxMnjoygOY4N3FUOVhZWlVPSzlRVzlJU1VRMkRWUVNXS1dERS4u

Regards
Christopher Santini

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TUESDAY 9 MAY

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the parent briefing for Tuesday 9th May,

14. **Staffing:**. The school welcomes the Acting Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub, Mr Darren Simpson, on Tuesday 9th May, The Acting Pupil Support Leader advert has now closed and interviews will take place in May.

2. **Pupil success:** Congratulations to **S3 pupils Nina Jasseh, Kianna Coertze and Victoria Adamska** who have won a creative industry project Daydream Believers with Adidas (Twitter link here… https://twitter.com/thomasofaquins/status/1651849888634642434) with their fantastic swimpossible vision. The pupils will be invited to a winners day in Edinburgh and will continue to work with professionals to support their vision of swimming inclusivity becoming reality. Thank you to Mr Case and Ms Wilson for their strategic support in this field.

   Congratulations to S2 Coral, Timon, and Misia have all worked so well to **recreate the school on Minecraft** and identify the systems to ensure the building is as environmental as possible. This team won the overall council challenge in the previous challenge, so fingers crossed for this one. Thank you to Miss Stalker and the Computing Science Faculty for their support. We are looking at how to share this piece of work with parents and hopefully will get back to you with a solution.

4. **Parent Council AGM:** the last meeting of the Parent Council will take place on Wednesday 31st May. I will be presenting draft school improvement themes at this meeting and it would be lovely to have as many Parents at this meeting to co-create Parent Council agendas and sub-groups for the next session and beyond. I know that we all share the same desire to make St Thomas of Aquin's the best school in Scotland.

5. **Parent Support S4-S6 iPad returns:** If your child is leaving St Thomas of Aquin's this term it is essential that they return their iPad, iPad charger, and box in excellent condition so the new S1 pupils have these in place to receive in August. All pupils leaving St Thomas must have their iPads returned to St Thomas no later than Wednesday 31st May. The cost of iPads are significant to a school and to ensure that we have a seamless rolling programme of iPads handed over to our new S1 pupils it is essential that Parents support us to get it right for all our pupils. Please can S4, S5, and S6 pupils leaving St Thomas of Aquin's hand in their Ipads, chargers, and iPad boxes after their last exam at reception and wait for Admin colleagues to take their names and year group from our lists so we do not contact further. Thank you in advance for this support

6. **The Award Ceremonies take place in 4 weeks' time**: Senior Awards Ceremony will take place on **Tuesday 6 June 2023** to celebrate the success of our pupils. In order to give Parents time to plan for the senior ceremony, I have asked Faculties to complete their pupil merit returns on Friday 5th of May.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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WEDNESDAY 3 MAY

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT Parent briefing for Wednesday 3rd May.

I would like to extend my thanks and praise to the 2022-23 S6 year group for their excellent behaviour and attitude on Friday 21st April. They are a credit not only to the school but to all of their parents.

The S1 Parents Evenings were a great set of nights of Teacher/Parent relationship building – thank you all for making this such a positive experience.

Please find a draft analysis of the S1-S6 pupil survey completed in March and April.

1. **Staffing:**. The Acting Pupil Support Leader advert has now closed and interviews will take place in May.

2. **S1-S3 Assemblies - ICT policy, phones, and toilets:** I will be meeting S1-S3 pupils in May Assemblies to remind them to follow the Digital Policy and ensure pupils do not have their phones in class, do not have ear pods in, and if they do require to go to the toilet to leave their phone in their bag. I will be sending pupils back to classes if I meet them in the corridor with phones in their hands or pods in their ears.

3. **Edinburgh International Festival:** Please find attached a flyer with information about the EIF **Young Peoples Pass** which offers free tickets to local young people, so they can experience the best classical music from around the world on our doorstep. Put a reminder in your diary to sign up on May 17th. **The Venezuelan Youth Orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel** will be a highlight!

4. **Annual Edinburgh Catholic Schools Community Mass:** St Catharine's Convent Lauriston Gardens, 9th May 2023 7PM. Theme for the mass will be *'Our Catholic Community'*.

5. **Parent Council AGM:** the last meeting of the Parent Council will take place on Wednesday 31st May. I will be presenting draft school improvement themes at this meeting and it would be lovely to have as many Parents at this meeting to co-create Parent Council agendas and sub-groups for the next session and beyond. I know that we all share the same desire to make St Thomas of Aquin's the best school in Scotland.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 24 APRIL

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquins, please find the parent briefing for Monday 24th April.

I would like to extend my thanks and praise to the 2022-23 S6 year group for their excellent behaviour and attitude on Friday 21st April. They are a credit, not only to the school, but to all of their parents.

1. **Staffing: Starting from Monday 17th April: Mr Murray** (PE) will be Acting Pupil Support Leader for St Andrews House on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. **Mrs Thompson** (Business) will be Acting Pupil Support Leader for St Andrews House on Wednesdays and Thursdays. I would like to extend my thanks to both colleagues for their support. The Acting Pupil Support Leader advert will close on Tuesday 25th April.

   I would like to thank our temporary Librarian **Zoe Johnstone** for all of her work and support at St Thomas of Aquin's this session. Zoe finishes at St Thomas of Aquin's next week and she has made a real impact at the school in her short time with us. Thank you Zoe.

2. **SQA exams**: Good luck to all of senior pupils with their exams… in bocca al lupo!

3. **S1-S3 Assemblies - ICT policy, phones, and toilets:** I will be meeting S1-S3 pupils in May Assemblies to remind them to follow the Digital policy and ensure pupils do not have their phones in class, do not have ear pods in, and if they do require to go to the toilet to leave their phone in their bag. I will be sending pupils back to classes if I meet them in the corridor with phones in their hands or pods in their ears.

4. **S1 Parents Evenings:** Our last Parents Evening of 2022-23 will be next week – S1 Parents Evening: Tuesday 25th of April and Wednesday 26th of April (5-7pm). For new Parents, the evening will take place in the main hall. I will be at reception to meet and greet you.

5. **Glow Accounts:** To support S4-S6 pupils accessing Esgoil for revision purposes please read the following information regarding Glow accounts for all S4-S6 pupils. Glow on PC and iPad - ClickView – watch this video as you need to access Glow differently on the iPad and the PC. All S4-S6 have a glow login which has revision materials for lots of subject areas – on Esgoil. Watch the video above to support with using Glow on your iPads – use the incognito window as it conflicts with your office 365 login if you don't.

- Login details:
- **Ce**StudentNumber@glow
- Glow123 – this will be required to be changed when logged in.

6. **Free Books!**: Here at St Thomas, we are keen to encourage reading because of the huge benefits it can offer, both educationally and emotionally. We would like pupils to have access to the public library system which means they can access **thousands of free e-books and audio books** through the Libby App which they can access on their school Ipad, their phone and other devices. Access to Libby can continue after pupils leave school. Our fantastic librarians can sign up S1 and S2 pupils to the system, but they will need your **active** consent to do so. If you complete the Form on the attached link, then this will allow them to complete the process. If your child already has a Library card, please complete the questionnaire anyway, so we can make sure all contact details are up to date on their account.

   https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xKB-HALiGfxMnjoygOY4N3FUOVhZWlVPSzlRVzlJU1VRMkRWUVNXS1dERS4u

   Reading is a large part of junior homework in English and developing reading skills is vital for success in all subjects. There are also many psychological benefits to reading. See link below

https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/articles/mental-health-and-the-benefits-of-reading?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=organic_social&utm_campaign=scottish_book_trust&utm_content=post

Regards
Christopher Santini

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WELCOME BACK TO ST THOMAS OF AQUINS

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

I welcome back all staff and pupils to St Thomas of Aquin's and I hope all families have had the opportunity to relax and spend time with their loved ones. This term will be very busy with SQA exams starting on the 24th of April, School and Faculty improvement planning, Meaningful May programmes for S4-S6 pupils, and the change of the school timetable on Tuesday 23rd of May.

I have attached analysis of Parent Survey along with Draft school improvement themes and I would like to see as many parents as possible at the Parent Council AGM on Wednesday 31st May to go over school improvement themes and work with the Parent Council to ensure these themes are on the agendas for future PC meetings.

The S1-6 pupil survey will close this Friday and at the moment we only have 362 responses (I am hoping for at least 500). Please support your child by asking them if they have completed the survey on their iPads.

I wish you all the very best of terms and I am looking forward to meeting with S1 parents next week at Parents Evenings.

Regards

Christopher Santini

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END OF WINTER TERM / START OF SUMMER TERM 2023

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing supporting the end of winter school term and the start of the summer term. I wish you and your families a very relaxing easter holidays when they arrive.

1. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mrs Brisley who is the preferred candidate for the permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher post. An advert for a permanent Craft & Design Teacher is being advertised and closes on April 5th.

2. **Easter Concert:** Congratulations to Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, our excellent visiting Music Teachers, and all pupils who performed at last night's Easter concert. It was such a lovely event and again it was great to speak with so many parents.

3. **Weekly Pupil Bulletin**: Please find a link to the weekly Pupil Bulletin which is sent to all pupils on a Wednesday via Daily Key Adult classes. I would like to thank Mr Whyte for his work collating this: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin/

4. **S1 Parents Evenings:** Tuesday 25th April and Wednesday 26th April (5-7pm)

5. **How does the school support the best behaviour at St Thomas of Aquin's?** You will find the Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour policy on the school website and this policy is being updated by Ms Whiffen through consultation with staff, pupils, and parents. Staff have completed their views and we will ensure pupils and parents have time to read and reflect on the draft policy: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-BRBLBB-Policy.pdf

6. **Hayward Review:** Please use the following link to find out more about professor Hayward's Curriculum and Assessment review and how to respond: The Hayward Review: Reforming Qualifications and Assessments :: Connect

Wishing you all a very Happy Easter holidays and a reminder that all pupils return to school on Monday 17th April.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 27 MARCH 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 27th March. The Easter holidays start on **Monday 3rd April** and all staff and pupils return to school on **Monday 17th April**.

7. **School improvement planning 2023-2025:**

St Thomas endeavours to improve the learning experience and their outcomes by working with pupils, parents and staff. To capture the voice of parents and pupils we will use surveys in March to understand what you think is working well and what needs improving. For Staff we use surveys, Inservice days and Collegiate Activity Time (1 hour sessions after schools throughout the year) to work on what is going well and what needs improving.

St Thomas of Aquin's shares the school improvement plan with parents and staff via the HT briefings and it is updated on the school website – https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Feb-update-CS-2022-23-St-T-of-Aquins-School-Improv.-1-2-23.pdf

The school improvement plan has been planned using the **How Good is Our School 4 Quality Indicators** (https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf**)** . **How Good is Our School 4** is a Scottish Education design framework to promote effective self-evaluation. The framework is divided into 3 main areas: Leadership and Management, Learning provision, and Success and Achievements. The Quality Indicators used in the St Thomas of Aquin's school improvement plan are:

- **Leadership and Management:** self-evaluation for self-improvement; Leadership of Change; and Management of resources to promote Equity
- **Learning provision:** Curriculum; Learning, Teaching and Assessment,
- **Success and Achievement**: Ensuring wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion; and Raising Attainment and Achievement

The school improvement plan is a continuous rolling plan which adapts to the needs of pupils in the context of local and national guidance. However, we strive to make the plan easy to understand and focused on our pupils, your children. One of the questions and responses in the Parent survey which needs analysing is the following question (The survey has closed and here is a Thursday 23trd March snapshot of 184 parents):

17. The school takes my views into account when making changes. (0 point)

More Details

Strongly agree	15
Agree	69
Disagree	27
Strongly disagree	11
Don't know	62



We wish to ensure that your voices are heard (Parent surveys and Parent Council meetings) to help shape the St Thomas of Aquin's school improvement plan and that you can identify your views in our school improvement planning

I am planning on creating a "you asked, we are doing" template that I will share with parents and pupils via the school improvement plan signposting your views that will be taken forward in the school's planning.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking**: The 3rd S1-S3 Tracking Reports will be issued to pupils at the end of this week.

   The final parents evening of the year will be the **S1 Parents Evenings on Tuesday 25th of April and Wednesday 26th of April.**

3. **How does the school support the best behaviour at St Thomas of Aquin's?** You will find the Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour policy on the school website and this policy is being updated by Ms Whiffen through consultation with staff, pupils, and parents. Staff have completed their views and we will ensure pupils and parents have time to read and reflect on the draft policy : https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-BRBLBB-Policy.pdf

4. **Dates for our diaries**:

   Aalborg Visit Wednesday 29th March: Ms Mariani has planned with colleagues the Danish group visiting S1-S3 classes. The group will be in the school from 9.00am and leaving around 2pm on Wednesday
   The Spring Concert Thursday 30th March. A great event whether your child is performing or not. (7pm onwards).

5. **May SQA Study Leave:** S4-S6 pupils will start their targeted study leave from **Monday 24th of April**, with **Friday 21st of April** being the last day for many pupils in school. **S6 pupils** will be allowed into school from **9.00-10.00 for an assembly led by the Pupil Support Team**. S4 and S5 year groups will have assemblies latter on in the day (Lesson 4 and 5) and will be allowed to leave after the assemblies. St Thomas of Aquin's must ensure that all pupils experience the best learning experiences every day and this includes **Friday 21st April**. I am specifically asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- **All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform**: white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- **All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner** which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- **I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building**. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- **I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school** and how they conduct themselves in the school building.

  In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to unacceptable and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with such an impressive S6 year group who have excelled in their attainment, achievement, and support for St Thomas' over the last 6 years.

Wishing you all a very Happy Easter holidays

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 20 MARCH 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 20th March:

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mr Simpson who was the successful candidate for the Acting Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub. We hope Mr Simpson can start with us in May. Interviews for the permanent Support for Learning Teacher post will be held on Tuesday 21st March. Good luck to all the candidates.

2. **School improvement planning 2023-2025:**

St Thomas endeavours to improve the school by working with pupils, parents, and staff. To capture the voice of parents and pupils we will use surveys in March to understand what you think is working well and what needs improving. For Staff we use surveys, Inservice days and Collegiate Activity Time (1 hour sessions after schools throughout the year) to work on what is going well and what needs improving.

St Thomas of Aquin's shares the school improvement plan with parents and staff via the HT briefings and it is updated on the school website – https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Feb-update-CS-2022-23-St-T-of-Aquins-School-Improv.-1-2-23.pdf

The school improvement plan has been planned using the **How Good is Our School 4 Quality Indicators** (https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf) . **How Good is Our School 4** is a Scottish Education design framework to promote effective self-evaluation. The framework is divided into 3 main areas: Leadership and Management, Learning provision, and Success and Achievements. The Quality Indicators used in the St Thomas of Aquin's school improvement plan are:

- **Leadership and Management:** self-evaluation for self-improvement; Leadership of Change; and Management of resources to promote Equity
- **Learning provision:** Curriculum; Learning, Teaching and Assessment,
- **Success and Achievement**: Ensuring wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion; and Raising Attainment and Achievement

The school improvement plan is a continuous rolling plan which adapts to the needs of pupils in the context of local and national guidance. However, we stive to make the plan easy to understand and focussed on our pupils, your children. One of the questions and responses in the Parent survey which needs analysing is the following question (The survey is not closed but here is a Thursday 16th March snapshot of 165 parents):

The school takes my views into account when making changes:

More Details

Strongly agree	14
Agree	60
Disagree	23
Strongly disagree	11
Don't know	57



We wish to ensure that your voices are heard (Parent surveys and Parent Council meetings) to help shape the St Thomas of Aquin's school improvement plan and that you can identify your voice in our school improvement planning

I am planning on creating a "you asked, we are doing" template that I will share with parents and pupils via the school improvement plan signposting your views that will be taken forward in the school's planning.

3. **Parent Council meeting and Parent survey:** Thank you to the 165 parents who have already completed the survey. The parent survey will be closed this week.

   The next Parent Council meeting is on Tuesday 21st March in the school building (Modern Language Faculty) from 6:30pm

   Click on the link - https://forms.office.com/e/UNmiL2mK5x or scan QR code below



4. **S1-S3 Tracking**: The 3rd S1-S3 Tracking Report window starts today and will end on 24th March. The final parents evening of the year will be the **S1 Parents Evenings on Tuesday 25th April and Wednesday 26th April.**

5. **Dates for our diaries**:

   CEC P7 Mass Thursday 23rd March (HT/DHT/CL of RE/CL of Perf Arts/ + 20 pupils to visit St Mary's Cathedral at 11.00am)
   Aalborg Visit Wednesday 29th March – S1-S3 classes will have small groups of pupils from Aalborg visiting. Mrs O Docherty will be leading on the planning.

6. **The Fun Run returns at St Thomas' on Friday 24th March**. The theme for this year will be Sports and Sparkles. Attached is the QR code and the hyperlink for the Just Giving Page.

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ecaim

JustGiving

Help raise £800 to The fund aims to provide financial support for pupils who are selected to participate in events at International/regional level competition

We're raising money to The fund aims to provide financial support for pupils who are selected to participate in events at International/regional level competition. Support this JustGiving Crowdfunding Page.
www.justgiving.com

7. **May SQA Study Leave:** S4-S6 pupils will start their targeted study leave from **Monday 24th April**, with **Friday 21st April** being the last day for many pupils in school. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from **9.00-10.00 on for an assembly led by the Pupil Support Team**. S4 and S5 year groups will have assemblies latter on in the day (Lesson 4 and 5) and will be allowed to leave after the assemblies. St Thomas of Aquin's must ensure that all pupils experience the best learning experiences every day and this includes **Friday 21st April**. I am specifically asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

- **All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform** – white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
- **All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner** which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
- **I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building**. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long.
- **I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school** and how they conduct themselves in the school building.
- In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils, the community Police Officer, and S6 parents participation at the school Prom due to unacceptable and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with such an impressive S6 year group who have excelled in their attainment, achievement, and support for St Thomas' over the last 6 years and coped so admirably in such challenging pandemic mitigations.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Self-Discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

MONDAY 13 MARCH 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please the HT parent briefing for week beginning Monday 13th March

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

5. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Miss O'Donnell who has been successful in an interview for a English Teaching post. Congratulations to Mr Campbell Hewson who will be joining St Thomas of Aquin's permanently in August. Interviews for an Acting Curricular Leader for The Wellbeing Hub took place today, Friday 10th of March, and permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher interviews will take place on Tuesday 21st of March.

6. **S1-S3 Tracking**: The 3rd S1-S3 Tracking Report window starts today and will end on 24th March. The final parents evening of the year will be the **S1 Parents Evenings on Tuesday 25th April and Wednesday 26th April.**

2. **Parent iPad CLPL postponed:** Unfortunately the Parent iPad training planned for 16th March will have to be postponed due to a low number of Parents being able to commit to the date. We do hope to run this event and this will be an agenda item at the next **Parent Council meeting which will be held in the school on Tuesday 21st March from 6.30pm**.

4. **Parent survey:** Parents are invited to complete the below survey to provide us with current views of the school. This will support us with our self-evaluation and help to support and inform our next steps in the school improvement plan. Thank you to the 140 parents who have already completed the survey.

   Click on the link - https://forms.office.com/e/UNmiL2mK5x or scan QR code below



6. **Dates for our diaries**:

   St Patricks Day Friday 17th March
   CEC P7 Mass Thursday 23rd March (HT/DHT/CL of RE/CL of Perf Arts/ + 20 pupils to visit St Mary's Cathedral at 11.00am)
   Aalborg Visit Wednesday 29th March – S1-S3 classes will have small groups of pupils from Aalborg visiting. Mrs O Docherty will be leading on the planning.

7. **The Fun Run returns at St Thomas' on Friday 24th March**. The theme for this year will be Sports and Sparkles. Attached is the QR code and the hyperlink for the Just Giving Page.

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[Help raise £800 to The fund aims to provide financial support for pupils who are selected to participate in events at International/regional level competition]

We're raising money to The fund aims to provide financial support for pupils who are selected to participate in events at International/regional level competition. Support this JustGiving Crowdfunding Page. www.justgiving.com

8. **May SQA Study Leave:** The City of Edinburgh developed guidance for study leave last year that shapes what happens in St Thomas of Aquin's from **Friday 21st April 2023** onwards (The draft last day of school) for S4-S6 pupils taking National Qualification examinations. The guidance is as follows:
    - All young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential
    - Our learners are undertaking a portfolio of SCQF qualifications that may include exam based and coursework-only elements, and at its core is parity of esteem.
    - Authorised absence for Study Leave during the SQA exam period should be proportionate. Therefore, ongoing attendance to access appropriate support and teaching input may be necessary to fulfil course requirements e.g. FA work placements, College courses.
    - Parents and pupils have already been notified regarding absence for Prelims (Study Leave) outside the official SQA exam period would be unauthorised e.g. no 'Prelim Leave'.

S4	Learners with 5 or more NQ exams	Learners with 4 or less NQ exams	Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Each NQ exam will have total of 3 days authorised absence for study leave and attendance will be registered on the day of the NQ exam (total of 4 days allocated to each NQ exam) • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Study Leave Allocation during SQA Exam period		Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
S5	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. study area, digital access, teacher input) • As a guide for learners with range of qualifications (exam-based and coursework) or flexible timetable schools could authorise 4 days absence for study leave per NQ exam i.e. total of 5 days allocated to each NQ exam	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Study Leave Allocation during SQA Exam period		Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
S6	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Following on from the above information S4-S6 pupils will start their targeted study leave from **Monday 24th April**, with **Friday 21st April** being the last day for many pupils in school. S6 pupils will be allowed into school from **9.00-10.00 on for an assembly led by the Pupil Support Team**. S4 and S5 year groups will have assemblies latter on in the day (Lesson 4 and 5) and will be allowed to leave after the assemblies.

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Regards
Christopher Santini

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Teamwork

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Success

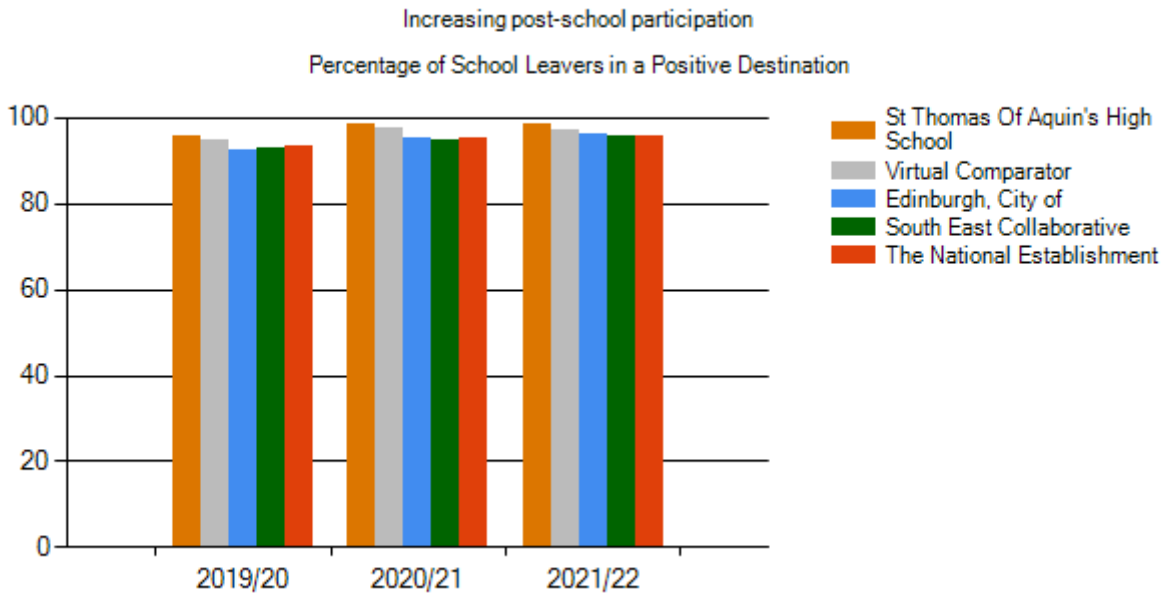
MONDAY 6 MARCH 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquins, please find the parent briefing for Monday 6th March

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Ms Teagles (Pupil Support Officer) who has been successful in gaining a place on the PDGE primary Teaching course for September. Ms Teagles will be leaving at the end of the summer term. Interviews for an Acting Curriculum Leader for The Wellbeing Hub and a permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher are being planned for March.

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Positive Destinations:** Please find below the 2022 Insight update on positive destinations (Positive Destinations are always a year behind so to gather confirmed data) . St Thomas of Aquin's continues to outperform its Virtual Comparator, CEC schools, SEIC, and the National average. **St Thomas of Aquin's has a Positive Destination of 98.59%**. Congratulations to all the staff and pupils.



4. **Lent support:** Thanks again to NET ministries, Mr Wotherspoon, and Ms Luncanu for the S4-S6 retreats last week. To support Sister Catherine and the Homeless Project at the Convent it would be great if Families, where possible, could bring in one or two of the following items and hand in to the RE Base:

- Pot Noodles
- Crisps and Nuts
- Chocolate or Cereal Bars
- Tinned items

5. **International Women's Day** will be celebrated on **Wednesday 8th March**. Our Equality Captains have organised activities for pupils during KA as well as a Kahoot in the hall during lunchtime. The aim of International Women's Day is to celebrate women's achievement, raise awareness about discrimination and take action to drive gender parity. For a subject specific approach, please find attached a series of links with lesson ideas, wall displays and interesting articles that you may wish to promote in your department.

6. **16th of March ICT Twilight CLPL for Parents**: I am hoping that a Parent iPad Twilight course will go ahead on 16th of March. To make this viable I will need at least 50 parents signing up. The Parent Council will be emailing parents with further information and will support the types of questions and learning you may wish from this course.



7. Save the date: Spring concert - Thursday March 30th

Parents, pupils, and staff are invited to St Thomas of Aquin's annual spring concert in the school hall on **Thursday 30th of March**. Tickets will be on sale on the door £4/£2 and refreshments will be available. Pupils have been practicing hard and all the instrumental programme ensembles including the orchestra, guitar ensemble, clarsach group and percussion ensemble will be performing. We are also hoping to include some soloists. We look forward to welcoming you on the night.

8. **Library Clubs:** All S1-3 pupils welcome. They are to come to the Library ASAP after they have finished their lunch.

Book Club – every Monday lunchtime from 6th March
Lego Cub – every Tuesday lunchtime from 7th March

9. **Voluntary Easter Revision classes:** We hope to send out the voluntary remote and face to face S4-6 Easter Revision timetable to pupils and parents by the 20th of March.

Regards
Christopher Santin

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Success

MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 27th February.

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

A reminder that there are 2 days of planned industrial action on **Tuesday 28th February and Wednesday 1st March**. Please find attached the letter from Lorna French.

1. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mrs Thomson (Support for Learning Teaching supply) who has been successful in gaining a Teaching position at an Edinburgh Secondary School. I would like to thank Mrs Thomson for all of her support since August. Adverts for an Acting Curriculum Leader for The Wellbeing Hub and a permanent part-time Support for Learning Teacher closed on Thursday 23rd February.

2. **16th of March ICT Twilight CLPL for Parents**: I am hoping that a Parent iPad Twilight course will go ahead on 16th March. To make this viable I will need at least 50 parents signing up. The Parent Council will be emailing parents with further information and will support the types of questions and learning you may wish from this course.

3. **Congratulations**: Well done to S5 Fabien Mathie who recently won a roller-blading competition in Eindhoven during the February break. A European Champion I believe!

2. **School uniform:** Parents can use the following link to support their children wearing full St Thomas of Aquins school uniform. I am asking all parents to support pupils wearing full school uniform

    - Black shoes
    - Black trousers (not joggers or jeans) or Black skirts
    - White shirt and school tie
    - Black jumpers or Hoodies
    - St Thomas of Aquin's Blazer (Optional)

    https://www.border-embroideries.co.uk/schools/st-thomas-of-aquins-rc-high.html

3. **Personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/. S4 and S5 pupils will be finishing their 2023-24 course choices this week.

3. **S4 Parents Evening:** S4 Parents Evening will take place on Monday 27th February from 5-7pm. The last Parents Evenings for session 2022-23 will be the S1 Parents Evening after the Easter Holidays.

    For **2023-24**, S1-S3 Parents Evenings will remain in person and S4-S6 Parents Evenings will take place remotely via iPads. I will then survey parents and staff regarding the how the school community experience Parents Evenings from 2024-25 onwards.

6. **Drama Club Performance 'The Fisherman and His Wife'**
Congratulations to all pupils who took part in the tech/dress rehearsal performance to parents last week. It was a great performance with special thanks to Jack McCrae on the lighting, Gwen Matthews on sound effects, Ava Pirrie and Alessandro Leone on props.

The P7 pupils are in for a treat next week when they come to visit.

Cast:

Marieme Diallo
Heidi Mellotte
Emily Kidd
James McKenna
Mia Mankowska
Ivy Parker
Carrie Granados
Polly Dickson wright
Aidan Sinclair
Imani Sykes
Stephanie Okeke
Eva Wilson
Ruhika Virulam
Vinnie Glean

Save the date: Spring concert - Thursday March 30th

We invite you to join us for our annual spring concert in the school hall on the above date. Tickets will be on sale on the door £4/£2 and refreshments will be available. Pupils have been practicing hard and all the instrumental programme ensembles including the orchestra, guitar ensemble, clarsach group and percussion ensemble will be performing. We are also hoping to include some soloists. We look forward to welcoming you on the night.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, I hope you have all enjoyed the February break. We are now in a six week period of learning, teaching, and assessment up until The Easter Holidays.

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

1. **Staffing**: A warm welcome to Veronica Lopez who has started work at St Thomas of Aquin's in the Admin Team. Adverts for an Acting Curriculum Leader for The Wellbeing Hub and a permanent part-time Support for Learning Leader have now gone live on Myjobscotland.

2. **Personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/. From early March, S4 and S5 pupils will be making their 2023-24 course choices.

3. **Ash Wednesday**: Wednesday 22nd February is Ash Wednesday, and S1-S4 pupils will be attending The Sacred Heart from 9.00-10.30.
   Senior Phase Retreats: From Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th February senior pupils will take part in NET ministries retreats. I would like to thank Mr Wotherspoon and The Chaplaincy Team for planning and supporting our delivery of Catholic Education.

4. **S4 Parents Evening:** S4 Parents Evening will take place on Monday 27th February from 5-7pm. This concludes all of our in person Parents Evenings for 2022-23.

   For **2023-24**, S1-S3 Parents Evenings will remain in person and S4-S6 Parents Evenings will take place remotely via iPads. I will then survey parents and staff regarding the how the school community experience Parents Evenings from 2024-25 onwards.

6. **Supporting iPad learning**: Five online courses available for use by learners and parents/carers. These courses comprise of several short videos designed to independently support the use of iPads for learning: Digital Skills – Edinburgh Learns Digital

A reminder that there are 2 days of planned industrial action on **Tuesday 28th February and Wednesday 1st March**.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for the **week beginning Monday 6th February**. The next HT parent briefing email will be sent on Monday 20th February. I wish you all an enjoyable February break when it comes.

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

1. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Ms Cairns who is the preferred candidate for the permanent **Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy**. St Thomas of Aquin's is fortunate to have Ms Cairns as our new permanent Mathematics lead.

2. **School Improvement Plan February update**: Please find the attached school improvement February update. A copy will be placed on the school website here: https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/

3. **Personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/. **S3 pupils** will be completing their personalisation and choice forms by Friday 10th February.

   On our return from the February break S4 and S5 pupils will be making their 2023-24 course choices.

4. **Senior Phase Retreats**: From Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th February senior pupils will take part in NET ministries retreats. I would like to thank Mr Wotherspoon and The Chaplaincy Team for planning and supporting our delivery of Catholic Education.

5. **Assessment arrangements:** With the 2023 Prelims completed and marked, Faculties will be completing documentation to provide relevant evidence in order to support our pupils with their SQA assessment arrangements in the April- May exams.

6. **Safer Internet day:** Safer Internet Day 2023 is on Tuesday the 7th February. During Daily Key Adult classes St Thomas of Aquin's will be looking at how to stay safe online and who to talk to if they have any concerns. Here is a link to the safer internet day website with top tips for parents and carers online: Link to website.

7. **Children's Mental Health Week:** The theme this year is 'Let's Connect' - through making a whole school paper chain. Coloured paper has been placed in Daily Key Adult classes trays to make the chains.

8. **Parent Council at St Thomas of Aquin's:** The Parent Council would like to support the school by introducing pupils to a diverse range of career pathways and supporting them to develop the skills and competencies needed to lead and succeed in the workplace. We would like to reach out to our school community, to see if you would like to be involved in helping us develop a St Thomas of Aquin's Industry Directory.

   We are looking for parents who might be willing to come in and talk to our pupils about their own careers. Informing young people of the pathways they took after leaving school and during their career, to give them some idea of what is possible and how to get there.

   What we ask from you:
   - In person or virtual talk
   - 30mins – 1 hour informal talk, delivered to specific year groups/pupils
   - Inform and inspire young people about your career path
   - Q&A session at the end

   If you feel you are in a position to offer any career support to the school, we would be grateful if you could fill in the online form below. https://forms.office.com/e/VKtaM5uuvv This survey will be live until 9th February 2023.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Self-Discipline **T**eamwork

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Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for the week beginning Monday 30th January.

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

1. **The Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquinas:** I would like to thank Mr Wotherspoon, Ms Luncanu, Ms Patrick, and Mr Kennedy for all of their support with The Feast Day of St Thomas. S1-S2 pupils were very well behaved at the 9.00am Mass in The Sacred Heart and the returned to the school and all year groups enjoyed a free Ice-cream handed out by our fantastic S6 Leadership Team. S3-S6 pupils attended Assemblies after break.

   A huge thank you to Fr Porter for supporting the school at our Mass and a thank you to all our pupils singing and playing at The Feast Day Mass.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking – next steps:** All S1-S3 pupils should now have received have their 2nd Tracking Report. The next steps for Pupils, Teachers, and Parents is to praise what is going well and focus on next steps for improvement. It is important that pupils understand their BGE Level, where they are in this Level and next steps in their learning. These should be ongoing conversations happening in the classroom and at home to help pupils/children be the best they can be.

   To support these important conversations The Senior Leadership Team would like to bring back S1-S3 Learner Conversations into Daily Key Adult Time. This important process will start with the completion of the 3rd S1-S3 Tracking Report completed in March.
   Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs O'Doherty will be supporting the planning and re-implementation of these conversations using the existing format.

3. **S4-S6 Tracking:** S4-S5 Tracking will be completed by Teachers on Tuesday 31st January. We are planning to have the Tracking Reports to pupils on Wednesday 8th February.

4. **English Folio Dates**: National 5 English Folios to be completed by 3rd March 2023
   Higher English Folios to be completed by 17th March 2023

5. **S3 into S4 personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/

   The S2 personalisation and choice window closed on Friday 27th January so please ensure if you are a S2 parent that you have sent in the Microsoft Form.

6. **Quatermile complaint:** On Thursday 26th January, St Thomas of Aquin's received a call from the manager of a convenience store in The Quatermile. The manger is concerned with a small number of St Thomas of Aquin's behaviour inside the shop as well as outside of the shop. PC Lowe and I have visited the shop and I will be speaking with pupils throughout the week. We will hold year group assemblies this week to help the community's ability to work together by using our values of Self-Discipline and Mutual Respect.

Can I ask parents to speak with your children, our pupils, about being on their best behaviour in The Quatermile during break and lunchtime and remind them of the "James Bond" esque CCTV that is prevalent throughout the area.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent email for Monday 23rd January

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

7. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Miss McVicar who is the successful candidate for the Fixed-Term Business Education post.

8. **The Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquin's – Friday, 27th January**: There will be a S1/2 Mass at The Sacred Heart this Friday from 9.00am. There will also be S3,S4,S5-S6 Assemblies from 11.00 led by Mr Wotherspoon, The Caritas Team, and Depute Headteachers.

9. **S1-S3 Tracking – next steps:** All S1-S3 pupils should now have received have their 2nd Tracking Report. The next steps for Pupils, Teachers, and Parents is to praise what is going well and focus on next steps for improvement. It is important that pupils understand their BGE Level, where they are in this Level and next steps in their learning. These should be ongoing conversations happening in the classroom and at home to help pupils/children be the best they can be.

10. **S4-S6 Tracking:** S4-S5 Tracking will be completed by Teachers on Tuesday, 31st January. We are planning to have the Tracking Reports to pupils on Wednesday, 8th February.

11. **English Folio Dates**: National 5 English Folios to be completed by **3rd March 2023**
    Higher English Folios to be completed by **17th March 2023**

12. **S3 into S4 personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/

The first-year group to complete their Personalisation and Choice will be S2 pupils. All S2 parents received an email communication last week week (S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2023-2024) . Please read the email and complete the Personalisation and Choice Form on Microsoft Teams by **Friday, 27th January.**

S4-S6 Information evening: Ms Mariani and I will be leading a MS Teams S4-S6 coursing information evening on Thursday, 26th January from 6-7pm. Ms Mariani will send out details to parents.

13. **Parent council meeting:** The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 2nd February. I will ask the Parent Council to email out details to parents.

14. **Parents Evenings:** The next 2 Parents Evenings will take place in February

    - S5/6 Parents Evening will take place on Thursday, 9th February from 5-7pm at St Thomas of Aquin's.
    - S4 Parents Evening will take place on Monday, 27th February from 5-7pm at St Thomas of Aquin's.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-23-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improv-Plan.pdf

MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT parent email briefing for Monday 16th January,

School values to focus on this term: Self-discipline and Mutual respect

1. **Staffing:** I would like to personally thank the impact that Ms R Faulkner and Mrs J Dallas are having in St Thomas of Aquin's. The calm and nurturing environment they are enhancing in The Wellbeing Hub is greatly appreciated by pupils and colleagues.

   The Interview for The Curricular Leader of Maths and Numeracy will take place on Tuesday 31st January.

2. **S3 into S4 personalisation and choice:** Please find the 2023 personalisation and choice sheets on the school website using this link https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/

   The S3-S4 Personalisation and Choice course booklet is in draft form and should be on the website by the end of next week.

   The first year group to complete their Personalisation and Choice will be S2 pupils. An email and text will be sent to all S2 parents this week (S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice - Session 2023-2024) . Please read the email and complete the Personalisation and Choice Form on Microsoft Teams by Friday 27th January.

   S4-S6 Information evening: Ms Mariani and I will be leading a MS Teams S4-S6 coursing information evening on Thursday 26th of January from 6-7pm. Ms Mariani will send out details to parents.

3. **Parent council meeting:** The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday 2nd February. I will ask the Parent Council to email out details to parents.

4. **Secondment:** Mrs Ritchie will start her Senior HR position with CEC as of week beginning Monday 16th January. Mrs Statham will be acting Business Manager on Wednesday and Thursday until January 2024.

5. **Parents Evenings:** The next 2 Parents Evenings will take place in February

   - S5/6 Parents Evening will take place on Thursday 9th February from 5-7pm at St Thomas of Aquin's.
   - S4 Parents Evening will take place on Monday 27th February from 5-7pm at St Thomas of Aquin's.

6. **Ready to Learn:** Thank you to Mr Cunningham and Ms Wilson for creating our new Faculty Ready to Learn Posters. I have shared 2 example on the school's Twitter page: https://twitter.com/thomasofaquins/status/1612791356405030914

   I am expecting all pupils to be ready to learn when they enter a classroom with a focus on:

   - Being on time

- Being prepared for the specific lesson: Homestudy, iPad charged, and a positive learning mindset
- Being ready to listen and take on leadership of their learning
- Wearing the appropriate uniform for the subject area
- Being respectful of oneself and other

7. **S2 Tik Tok Level 4 group:** I have concluded the investigations into a S2 (S1) Tik Tok group created by St Thomas of Aquin's pupils which has involved pupils filming one another throwing objects from the top floor of the school. Parents of identified pupils have been contacted by the Senior Leadership Team.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY, 9 JANUARY 2023

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 9th January,

1. **Staffing:** Ms Mariani and I will be interviewing for the permanent post for Curricular Leader of Maths in late January 2023. St Thomas of Aquin's also welcomes Mrs O Doherty (Temporary Depute Headteacher until June), Ms Faulkner (Permanent Pupil Support Officer for The Wellbeing Hub) and Mrs Dallas (Permanent Pupil Support Assistant for The Wellbeing Hub).

2. **S2 into S3-4 course booklet:** As a result of a very good discussion at the Parent and Pupil S2 coursing information evening held in November 2022, St Thomas of Aquin's will be creating a S3 and S4 Faculty/Subject course information booklet. I have asked Mrs O'Doherty to lead this piece of work and to have it shared with parents by Wednesday 18th (Placed on the school website).

3. **S2 Tik Tok Level 4 group:** I am concluding investigations on a S2 (S1) Tik Tok group created by St Thomas of Aquin's pupils which has involved pupils filming one another throwing objects from the top floor of the school. I will be contacting parents of identified pupils this week regarding next steps.

   I am asking S1-S2 parents to speak with their children to ensure pupils are not following the group.

4. **January 2023 Prelim arrangements:** S4-S6 prelims start on Friday 6 January and will end on Friday 20 January.
   There will be no study leave for prelims but on the days pupils have a prelim they will be able to come in for this and not be expected to attend other classes that day. On the days that pupils do not have a prelim they will be expected to attend classes as per their normal timetable. If a pupil does not attend school on the days that they do not have a prelim this will be marked as unauthorised.

   Pupils should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of their prelim and ensure that all smart watches, mobile phones, and other devices are switched off/silenced and placed in their school locker, bag or left at home before entering the exam. Bags will be kept at the front of the room/hall. Please support your child by ensuring that they bring the relevant stationary/equipment for each prelim (pens, pencils, highlights, calculator, ruler etc). We will have some spare should they forget something.

   Due Industrial Action on Wednesday 11th January the S4-S6 Maths Prelim will be moved to Monday 23rd January. Please see the attached Lorna French letter.

5. **SEIC Literacy Learning School:** St Thomas of Aquin's is excited by being identified as a SEIC Literacy Learning School (centres who share their excellent practice by hosting a visit from other schools across the region who are participating in a SEIC Connector Programme). During 2023, colleagues from other Local Authorities will be invited into St Thomas of Aquin's to meet with Ms Murray (CL of English), Mrs Bendall (Support for Learning Leader), and Ms O'Donnell (Literacy Coordinator) as well as myself to share all of the work of the school. Congratulations to us all of being invited to become a SEIC Literacy Learning School.

6. **Recognising Pupil Achievement**: Mr Reid and Mr Murray and I met last term to discuss the tracking and celebrating of pupil achievement across the school. The identified pupil achievement will range from sporting, academic, musical, and charitable achievements. A draft plan is as follows:

- A MS forms document will be created to collate pupil's achievements.
- Pupils will complete this during KA time.
- This will be completed twice a year. One at the end of October, and the second in Early May. This will tie in with the school's two newsletter to allow achievements to be showcased to the school community.
- Sports Captains will be responsible for updating the St Thomas Achievement board with these achievements.
- Pupils will receive a badge for their achievements i.e. Full or Half Colours.

7. **There are only 5 places available for the Manchester City vs Wolves trip on Sunday 22nd January**. The price is **£70,** and the final payment must be paid by Wednesday 18th January. Please speak with Mr Murray if interested.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

S1-S3 Tracking start on Monday 12th December and finishes on Monday 9th January 2023.

1. **Friday 16th December St Thomas's Rights Day :** The plan is that pupils will follow their usual timetable and instead of focusing on the topic area they have been covering in e.g. P1 Geography they will all do the same Rights-Based lesson on Article 42 in Lesson 1 (then follow on with the other rights included for the rest of the day). There will be a separate focus for colleagues in PE to support more active learning.

- Period 1: Article 42: Everyone Must Know Children's Rights
- Period 2: Article 2: No Discrimination

- Break: Celebration of Rights in the Hall

- Period 3: Article 14: Freedom of Thought and Religion
- Period 4: Article 19 : Protection from Violence
- Period 5: Article 24: Health, Water, Food, Environment

- PE: Article 31: Rest, Play, Culture, Arts

2. **St Thomas of Aquin's Football trip:**
   Manchester City vs Wolves, Sunday 22nd January
   Cost of trip: £70
   Deposit: £25
   Trip is capped at 50, if this is reached there will be a selection process

3. **Guide to Children's Rights** for Parents, Carers and family members. This much anticipated resource provides information about children's rights and introduces the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is the internationally mandated children's rights treaty which sets out the rights that all children and young people should expect and what they need to grow up happy, healthy and safe. It outlines the central role played by parents and families and also recognises that they need protection and assistance to support the rights and wellbeing of their children.

The booklet **Guide to Children's Rights** was created by the UNCRC Parents Network, made up of parenting organisations and Scottish Government policy officials, who have been meeting for over a year to look at how best to inform parents, carers and family members about the rights of their children Children's rights | Parent Club

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2022

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the last parent briefing of the year: Monday 19th December

1. **Christmas Concert:** Thank you to Ms Patrick and Mr Kennedy for a superb Christmas concert on Thursday 16th December. This was our first Christmas concert since 2019 and it was so lovely to have so many parents returning to the building to celebrate the talents of our pupils, your children, and to offer our gratitude to all of the music staff who support St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

2. **Staffing:** I would like to congratulate Mrs Ritchie, the school's Business Manager, in being the successful candidate for the strategic Leadership and Wellbeing temporary remit at The CEC for 2 days a week starting in early 2023. I will be planning support to allow Mrs Ritchie to start this post as soon as possible.

   I welcome Mrs Evonne O'Doherty as a seconded Depute Head Teacher (Temporary) to St Thomas from January to June 2023. I will be sharing Mrs O' Doherty's remit with the school community in January 2023.

   The permanent post for Curricular Leader of Maths closed on the Wednesday 14th December 2022 and I am planning to interview candidates in January 2023.

3. **January 2023 Prelim arrangements:** Prelims will commence on Friday 6 January and will end on Friday 20 January. There will be no study leave for prelims but on the days that your child has a prelim they will be able to come in for this and not be expected to attend other classes that day. On the days that your child does not have a prelim they will be expected to attend their classes as per their normal timetable. If your child does not attend school on the days that they do not have a prelim this will be marked as unauthorised, and you will continue to receive daily absence texts which will require a response. Please support your child to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of their prelim. Your child should ensure that all smart watches, mobile phones, and other devices are switched off/silenced and placed in their school locker, bag or left at home before entering the exam. Bags will be kept at the front of the room/hall. Please support your child by ensuring that they bring the relevant stationary/equipment for each prelim (pens, pencils, highlights, calculator, ruler etc). We will have some spare should they forget something.

4. **End of term**: The school will close for the Christmas Holidays on Tuesday 20th December at 1.00pm. Tomorrow, pupils can wear appropriate non-uniform clothing to school and donations can be made in Key Adult Classes – if pupils are wearing inappropriate clothing I will be supporting them with school hoodies, skirts, and trousers

S4-S6 pupils will have an Assembly at 12.20 and then will be dismissed
S1-S3 pupils will have an Assembly at 12.40 and then will be dismissed

All Pupils will return to St Thomas of Aquin's on Thursday 5th January in full school uniform.

Regards
Christopher Santini

MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT parent briefing for Monday 12th December

1. **Staffing:** The permanent post for Curricular Leader of Maths closes on the 14th December 2022.

2. **Christmas jumper day**: On Thursday 16th December, pupils can wear a Christmas jumper along with full school uniform. Donations will be greatly received.

3. **End of term**: The school will close for the Christmas Holidays on Tuesday 20th December at 1.00pm.
   S4-S6 pupils will have an Assembly at 12.20 and then will be dismissed
   S1-S3 pupils will have an Assembly at 12.40 and then will be dismissed

4. **Full and Tracking reports**: S5-6 reports will be completed by the end of this week, quality assured, and will be issued to senior pupils by the end of term.

MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2022

Please find the HT parent email for Monday 5th of December,

1. **Planned Industrial Action – Thursday 8th of December** : I emailed all parents on Friday 2nd of December with a letter from Lorna French (Please find attached) which explained the range and type of school closures occurring in The City of Edinburgh on Thursday 8th of December. On Thursday the 8th of December, St Thomas of Aquin's will be closed to all pupils. I completed a risk assessment that has guided me to this health and safety decision. St Thomas of Aquin's will be open to staff to deliver teaching and learning. Those colleagues working in school will be working within the framework of the normal school timetable and supporting pupils with a remote learning experience with supported

feedback as per their allocated Teaching lessons on Thursday 8th of December. Pupils are advised to check their school timetable and log on to MS Teams in the morning.

St Thomas of Aquin's will be open at lunchtime (1.20-150pm) to pupils in receipt of free school meals.

On the day of the planned industrial action, any arising factors which will adversely impact on service delivery will be dynamically risk assessed, discussed with CEC senior manager, and then the decision communicated with parents as soon as possible.

2. **Advent:** During Advent there will be **morning prayers each day at 8.30** and a **weekly Mass each Tuesday at 8.00** in the School Oratory.

   The Sacred Heart Food Bank, organized by the St Vincent de Paul Society, is rather depleted at the moment. A number of people make regular use of it and are grateful for any help, especially during these colder months and with the rising cost of living. If families at St Thomas can support with 1 or 2 tinned and dry food donations then they will be delivered to The Sacred Heart at the end of the term. **Pupils can bring in donations and place them around the School Crib at reception.**

3. **S5-6 Full reports**: S5-6 reports will be completed by the end of this week, quality assured, and will be issued to senior pupils by the end of term.

4. **St Andrews Day:** Thank you to all colleagues and pupils who supported our celebrations of St Andrews Day. Please see the school Twitter account for photos of the day: **https://twitter.com/thomasofaquins/status/1597905714554744832**

5. **Christmas music concert:** On Thursday 15th of December (7.00-9.00pm) St Thomas of Aquin's will be holding its first Christmas concert since December 2019. This is one of the highlights of the year, in my HT opinion, and I look forward to meeting the parents of the pupils who are performing and are supported so very well by Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, and all of the visiting Music Teachers.

6. **Friday 16th of December St Thomas's Rights Day :** The plan is that pupils will follow their usual timetable and instead of focusing on the topic area they have been covering in e.g. P1 Geography they will all do the same Rights-Based lesson on Article 42 in Lesson 1 (then follow on with the other rights included for the rest of the day). There will be a separate focus for colleagues in PE to support more active learning. These articles have been chosen as important areas of focus by the **Pupil Rights Respecting Group.** The group are also in the process of finalising the lessons which will be sent out to all staff by the end of **07/12/22**.

- Period 1: Article 42: Everyone Must Know Children's Rights
- Period 2: Article 2: No Discrimination

- Break: Celebration of Rights in the Hall

- Period 3: Article 14: Freedom of Thought and Religion
- Period 4: Article 19 : Protection from Violence
- Period 5: Article 24: Health, Water, Food, Environment

- PE: Article 31: Rest, Play, Culture, Arts

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY, 28NOVEMBER 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parent briefing for Monday 28th of November

1. **Advent:** Sunday 27th of November marked the beginning of Advent. During Advent there will be **morning prayers each day at 8.30** and a **weekly Mass each Tuesday at 8.00** in the School Oratory.

2. **S4 Study skills:** Ms Brisley will deliver study skills sessions to all S4 pupils at the start of December in preparation for their upcoming prelims. Ms Mariani has completed the Prelim schedule for January 2023 which is attached for S4-S6 parents.

3. **S5-6 Full reports**: S5-6 reports will be completed during the next 2 weeks and will be issued to senior pupils by the end of term. S4 reports will be handed out to S4 pupils in Key Adult Classes on Wednesday 30th of November.

4. **Christmas music concert:** On Thursday 15th of December (7.00-9.00pm) St Thomas of Aquin's will be holding its first Christmas concert since December 2019. This is one of the highlights of the year, in my HT opinion, and I look forward to meeting the parents of the pupils who are performing and are supported so very well by Ms Patrick, Mr Kennedy, and all of the visiting Music Teachers.

5. **Quatermile 4 Building:** I was asked to attend one of the buildings at Quatermile due to St Thomas of Aquin's pupils entering the building and misusing the revolving door. I have met with identified pupils to ask them not to do this and I would welcome parents speaking with their children about the general very good behaviour of pupils around the Quatermile at break and lunchtime as well as ensuring pupils treat the Quatermile area with the very best respect.

6. **Would you like to join a focus group to discuss the future of Education in Scotland?** CEC have space for 50 parents/carers to join the National Discussion 7-9pm Monday 28th November at the Library in Liberton High school. For more details or to book your place email - **edinburgh@npfs.org.uk**

Hosted by

- Stephen Kelly – Senior Education Officer, City of Edinburgh Council
- Naomi Barton - Edinburgh Rep for National Parent Forum Scotland

The 2 hour event will include 2 things

1. an opportunity to hear about the vision for Education in Edinburgh and
2. participate in the National Discussion questions

Event details
Venue – Library, Liberton High school (Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh, EH17 7PT)
Time – 7-9pm
Date – Monday 28th November 2022

If you are unable to attend but you want us to pass on your views, please email - **edinburgh@npfs.org.uk**

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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TUESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent email for Tuesday 22nd of November

1. **Planned Industrial Action – Thursday 24th of November**:.

St Thomas of Aquin's will be closed to pupils and staff on Thursday 24th of November. Due to employee rights regarding industrial action, we are unable to collate accurate advance information about which teacher colleagues will be striking on Thursday 24th November. As most teaching staff are likely to be taking industrial action, Learning and Teaching will be affected for most learners.

- Young people should log on to Teams at the start of the school day to check if they have any scheduled lessons.
- If there are no lessons, Contingency Learning Grids are available on the CEC webpage: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/homelearning - this page will continue to be updated.
- Alternative forms of learning including e-sgoil and ClickView links are also available on the CEC webpage above.
- Parent Pay refunds will be provided to those families who have prepaid lunch on Thursday 24th November, as soon as possible.

2. **S4 Study skills:** Ms Brisley will deliver study skills sessions to all S4 pupils at the start of December in preparation for their upcoming prelims. Ms Mariani has completed a draft Prelim schedule for January 2023 and this will be shared with pupils and parents by the first week in December.

3. **A message from CEC – Christmas School Closure times:** Christmas will soon be upon us so we are beginning to plan now for those important dates – none more so than the last day of term itself. As usual, pupils will finish early, but we want to ensure that they are all fed before they leave the premises. Catering colleagues will provide a soup and sandwich lunch and will work with you on an individual basis to ensure children and young people can be dismissed at 1pm.

4. **S2 Parents Curriculum Information Evening**: Will take place online on Tuesday 22 November 2023 from 6.00 until 7.00 pm. The purpose of this session is to share information with our parents regarding the curriculum structure (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/) and the pathways for progression available at St Thomas' in The Broad General Education and Senior Phase level. Please find joining details below

S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice Parents' Information Evening

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

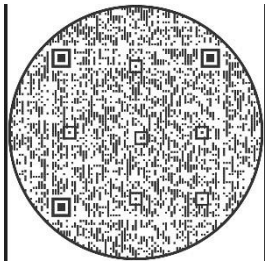
Click here to join the meeting

Meeting ID: 337 741 423 332

Passcode: 4msZ8n

Download Teams | Join on the web

Learn more | Meeting options



Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT parent email for week beginning Monday 14th of November.

1. **Prelims 2023:** Ms Mariani has completed a draft Prelim schedule for January 2023 and this will be shared with pupils and parents by the first week in December.

2. **Key Adult Time:** Thank you to parents for supporting The Pupil Support Team and The Senior Leadership Team by ensuring pupils are wearing full uniform to school.

   - A White shirt and the school tie
   - School Jumper or Hoodie (I am seeing pupils wearing a Hoodie without the shirt and tie)
   - School Trousers – not Jeans and not Tracksuit joggers
   - School skirts – please can parents support pupils not wearing only leggings.
   - Black shoes

   Uniform can be purchased from Borders Embroidery: https://www.borderembroideries.co.uk/schools/st-thomas-of-aquins-rc-high.html

3. **S4 Full Reports:** S4 Full Reports will be completed by Friday 18th of November and then quality assured, printed and handed out to pupils on Monday 28th of November.

4. **Parent Council meeting:** The Parent Council will be meeting on Tuesday 15th of November (6.30-8.30). I am very pleased to announce that Krissie Davies will be attending from CEC Empowered Learning to discuss iPads.

   I will also be analysing the School's Insight attainment data which I emailed out in late September/early October.

5. **Feast Day of St Margaret:** Wednesday 16th November is St Margaret's Feast Day. There will be 3 assemblies during period 1 and 2 for Saint Margaret's pupils. Tannoy announcements will be made to call the year groups down. As St Margaret's was very generous to the poor and homeless, The St Margaret's House Captains have arranged for there to be free ice cream available at break time.

6. **Called to Love Drama performance and workshop 21-24 November**
   S4-S6 Pupils will attend a performance of the play *Hear Me Out* as part of the *Called to Love* relationships programme. This will be the second event of the year in the RE Retreat Programme, where pupils experience religious education outside of the formal classroom setting, and is being organised with the support of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

7. **S2 Parents Curriculum Information Evening**: Will take place online on Tuesday 22 November 2023 from 6.00 until 7.00 pm. The purpose of this session is to share information with our parents regarding the curriculum structure (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/) and the pathways for progression available at St Thomas' in The Broad General Education and Senior Phase level. Please find joining details below

S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice Parents' Information Evening

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

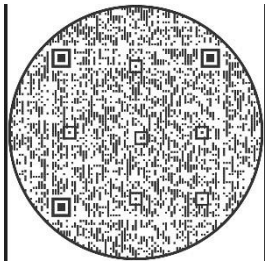
Click here to join the meeting

Meeting ID: 337 741 423 332

Passcode: 4msZ8n

Download Teams | Join on the web

Learn more | Meeting options



Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the Parent briefing email for Monday 7th of November

8. **Staffing**: St Thomas of Aquin's said goodbye and good luck to Mrs Murray (Business Education Teacher) on Friday. I hope to have a Business Education Teacher in place very soon. I will keep parents updated.

9. **During Key Adult Time:** Thank you to all parents for supporting their children wearing **full school uniform** to St Thomas of Aquin's. During November The Pupil Support Team and The Senior Leadership Team will be supporting pupils not wearing full uniform at Key Adult Time.

   The school has a range of clothing to support the wearing of full school uniform:
   - A White shirt and the school tie
   - School Jumper or Hoodie (I am seeing pupils wearing a Hoodie without the shirt and tie)
   - School Trousers – not Jeans and not Tracksuit joggers
   - School skirts – please can parents support pupils not wearing only leggings.
   - Black shoes

   I am also asking for parents to support a discussion with their children about the importance of being in school on time at the start of the day (8.40), after break (10.45), and after lunch (1.50).

10. **Ipads and mobile phones:** With the introduction of the new Digital classroom policy this term it is encouraging to see so many classes around the school embracing the introduction of iPads in learning and teaching. We are however aware that a small number of pupils continue to use their mobile phones in classrooms. To support St Thomas' being the best school we can be, staff will be reminding pupils to:

    - If a pupil has a mobile phone out in class the Teacher will ask the pupil to put it away in their bag.
    - If the mobile phone appears again the Teacher will ask the pupil to put it on the Teacher's desk until the end of the lesson. The phone will be given back to the pupil at the end of the class.
    - If the pupil does not comply with this ask, then the Curricular Leader maybe asked to support.
    - I would hope that there would be no need to have Senior Leadership Team supporting regarding the use of a mobile phones, however we may be called to support on very rare occasions.

11. **S2 Parents Evening**: Our next Parents Evening will take place today and tomorrow Monday November 7th and Tuesday November 8th . I am looking forward to meeting with S2 parents and speaking with as many of you as possible.

Monday 7th of November	**Tuesday 8th of November**
English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning	Pupil Support Leaders

12. **S2 Information Evening**: An MS Teams meeting will take place on Tuesday 22nd of November to support S2 Parents with personalisation and choice coursing into S3.

13. **S4 Full Reports:** S4 Full Reports will be completed by Friday 18th of November and then quality assured, printed and handed out to pupils on Monday 28th of November.

14. **Parent Council meeting:** The next Parent Council meeting will be a face to face meeting on Tuesday 15th of November. I am very pleased to announce that Krissie Davies will be attending from CEC Empowered Learning to discuss iPads. I will also being analysing the School's Insight attainment data which I emailed out in late September/early October.

    I do hope to see as many parents as possible.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2022

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the Parent briefing for Monday 3rd October.

1. **Parent Council:**

iPad Rollout : At our first parent council, Tuesday 20th September, it was agreed to create a Frequently Asked Question and Answer document that will hopefully answer questions about using iPads at home. If parents have questions, please fill in the form link below and the Parent Council will work with the School Leadership Team to come up with answers which will be shared with all parents. This is an anonymous form so you don't need to provide personal details.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxkFnXyQzgxetZgISzOBVXmS4_2MJLmksInHpISM0SFZwW3w/viewform?usp=sf_link

In addition, Mr Santini and Ms Mariani are looking to arrange an information/training session for parents/carers on using iPads so if this would be of interest to you, please let us know on the form. This is just to find out approximate numbers who are interested.

Quiz Night - Wednesday 26th October 19:00-20:30

All your favourite TV quizzes rolled into the best quiz ever in the school hall. All families, carers, staff, pupils and friends welcome and entry is free with prizes for winning teams. Come with a team or join one on the evening. Drinks and snacks available. To reserve a place / table for your team please fill in this **updated** form. You will need to provide an email address.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-Yd7esKHTiqsRfPFQn8uPP1YVnk8pwZaDDSsJBhtaXDBr7Q/viewform

2. **S1-S3 Tracking:** S1-S3 Tracking will start on Monday 26th September and finish on Friday 7th October. S4-S6 Tracking reports have been given to pupils on Friday 30th September via Daily Key Adult class.

3. **School Insight attainment**: Please find attached the St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School 2022 Insight attainment analysis document. I am very encouraged with the attainment of pupils at St Thomas of Aquin's and would like to thank pupils, staff, and parents for their work and support.

I am meeting with Parents from the Attainment and Outcome group on Friday 28th October at 9.00am and if any other parents with to join this attainment analysis meeting you are most welcome.

4. **S3 Parents Evening**: Our first face to face Parents Evenings in 2 years will take place on Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th October.

   A reminder to parents that all Parents Evenings this session are face to face this year and start from 5pm until 7pm. S1-S3 Parents Evenings are to be held over 2 nights to support Parents being able to speak with as many Teachers as possible. S4-S6 Parents Evenings will take place over one evening.

   Please see the school website for all Key Dates: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parentscarers/key-dates/

Wednesday 12th October	Thursday 13th October

English	Maths
Science	Social Subjects
Modern Languages	Expressive Arts
Performing Arts	Physical Education
Religious Education	Computing Science
Support for Learning	Pupil Support Leaders

5. **Awards 2021-22:** Please find attached the 2021-22 pupil awards brochure. Pupils will start receiving their certificates in Daily Key Adult Time next week. Mrs Ritchie will be convening a short life working group to start the process of planning a June Awards Ceremony for S1-S3 pupils and S4-S6 pupils.

6. **EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL CLOSURES – CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL – HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S STATE FUNERAL.** The City of Edinburgh schools were closed on Monday, 19 September during the State Funeral, an exemption was today granted by Scottish Ministers under section 133(4) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to close public schools on **24th October 2022**. This exceptional school closure is an additional day to replace that holiday.

   Please note that City of Edinburgh Council's schools' inset day that was due to take place on 24th October will be moved to 25th October – pupils should return to school on Wednesday 26th October.

7. **School Masses**: Please find the dates for School Masses after the October break. Mr Wotherspoon and The Chaplaincy team will be planning music and readings over the next 2 weeks.
   - Tue 1 Nov All Saints day
   - Wed 16 Nov Feast Day of Saint Margaret
   - Wed 30 Nov Feast day of Saint Andrew

Regards
Christopher Santini

School improvement plan link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-23-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improv-Plan.pdf

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MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Good morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

Please find the parent briefing for Monday 12th September.

Following the news of Her Majesty's death on Thursday 8th September, The City of Edinburgh Council have taken the decision that St Thomas of Aquin's RC High school will be one of a number of Secondary and Primary Schools to close on **Tuesday 13th September at 12 noon** (**and buildings must be clear of Staff and Pupils by 12:30 pm to allow them to get home safely**).

This is due to the route taken by the Queen's Coffin which will involve numerous road closures across the city early in the afternoon**.** Please can you discuss with your child/children the journey to and from St Thomas of Aquin's on Tuesday 12th September to take into account the road closures.

1. **S4-S6 Tracking**: Tracking for all S4-S6 pupils starts this week. S4-S6 Tracking is to be completed by Friday 23rd of September and sent to all Parents by the end of week beginning Monday 26th September.

   Please refer to the 2022-23 Key Dates document which will be placed on the school website.

2. **iPad rollout:** iPad roll out will start this week. S1 pupils who have returned the agreement documents will receive their iPads this afternoon (Monday 12th September). The school will email parents on a daily basis explaining which year groups will be receiving their iPads throughout the week.

3. **Key Adult**: This is a reminder to all parents and S1-S6 pupils that Key Adult is an important part of our universal support. All pupils are therefore expected to attend their Key Adult class every day from 8.40 until 8.50. Thank you.

4. **Monday 19th September**: Please remember that Monday 19th September is a Bank Holiday and the school will be closed.

Thank you to all the staff, pupils, and parents for making the Parent Social such a great event on Thursday 8th

September. With around 150 parents attending it was lovely to be able to meet and share parent stories of St Thomas of Aquin's - please come and support the school by attending The Parent Council on Tuesday 20th September from 6.30pm.

Regards
Christopher Santini

School improvement plan link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-23-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improv-Plan.pdf
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MONDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Good Morning Colleagues, please find the staff briefing for Monday 5th September

I am really looking forward to meeting over 100 parents on Thursday 8th September from 5.30pm at our school parent social. My intention is to try and speak with you all. Please come and say hello and I can listen to your views on St Thomas of Aquins'.

1. **2021-22 Standards and Quality Report**: Please find attached St Thomas of Aquin's 2021-22 Standards & Quality Report. This will be placed on the school website at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/

2. **Faculty attainment meetings with HT/DHT:** I will be meeting with Curricular and Pastoral Leaders over the next 2 weeks to discuss Faculty attainment results. I can update parents regarding the school's 2022 attainment results at the first Parent Council on Tuesday 20th September from 6.30pm onwards (in person at the school).

3. **Clothing in classrooms**: I am asking pupils to take off their outside jackets in classrooms at least until after the October break when discussions on ventilation will take place via our Health and Safety meetings and advice from the Scottish Government may be updated.

4. **HT Ethos and Equality assemblies:** This week I will be meeting with all year groups regarding Ethos and Equality Assemblies:

   Monday 5th September: S1 Lesson 3; S2 Lesson 4; S3 Lesson 5. **Tuesday 6th September:** S4 Lesson 3, S5 Lesson; S6 Lesson 5.

5. **iPad rollout:** Thank you to all parents who have completed and returned the HAS and RUA documents https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learning-opportunities/ipads/ . Pupils can only receive their iPads during the week of Monday 12th if we have both documents signed and returned. If you child has not handed you these forms you can access them on the school website or phone the school Admin team.

Regards
Christopher Santini

School improvement plan link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-23-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improv-Plan.pdf
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MONDAY, 29 AUGUST 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing for week beginning Monday 29th August

On Thursday 8th September all St Thomas of Aquin's parents are invited to the school building from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. This will be a great social event in which the school are providing, free of charge, a variety of Curry (chicken, vegetarian, and vegan). This will be an opportunity for parents/carers to meet each as well as meet Mr Santini and for many parents to have their first opportunity to come into the school. We will use the outside picnic tables and school hall. You will receive a MS Forms survey asking if you will be attending so the school can plan the appropriate amount of food to serve on the night.

1. **Wet weather days**: To support wet/stormy/snow weather days S4-S6 pupils can use their Lesson 2 classrooms at break and Lesson 5 classrooms at lunchtime. This will support S1-S3 pupils use of the main hall.

2. **Draft SQA results**: Please find attached the 2021-22 National Qualifications School and Faculty exam analysis summary. I met with members of The Parent Council regarding the school's attainment on Friday 26th August. I will be planning a further meeting with this group once the school appeals have been completed.

3. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Ms Jenny Donaldson who will start as a Fixed-term part-time Physical Education Teacher as soon as possible. A permanent Pupil Support Officer advert for the Wellbeing Hub closes on Wednesday 31st of August.

4. **Lunchtime and afterschool clubs**: Please find attached the 2022-23 lunchtime and afterschool club programme. Thank you to Mr Murray, Mr Reid, S6 Sports Captains and all staff and pupils involved in leading these clubs. Please refer to the attachment.

5. **Pupil Parliament:** The first 2 Pupil Parliament dates will be **Wednesday 21st September** and **Thursday 10th November.** Melissa, Luke, and Liam will support S6 pupils planning and leading these important pupil voice sessions.

6. **2021-22Attainment and achievement certificates:** Faculties/subjects will complete attainment and achievement certificates for S2 to S6 Leavers by **Friday 16th September**.

7. 2023 NQ Exam timetable: **SQA will publish the 2023 exam timetable on SQA Connect today. The exam diet will start on** Monday 24 April **and finish on** Thursday 1 June 2023**, and not Wednesday 31 May as previously advised. Thursday 1 June has been included as a contingency day and so we ask that you do not plan any centre business or events on this date. Results day will be** Tuesday 8 August 2023**.**

8. **S6 – UCAS:** The school's step by step UCAS application guide has been added as a pdf to the year group house team pages. Any pupil requiring a paper copy should see their Pupil Support Leader.

S5 - UCAS Higher Education Convention Tues 6th September (am): All S5 pupils will be attending the UCAS discovery event at the Royal Highland Centre on **Tuesday 6th September**. Coaches have been hired to transport pupils to and from the event. All pupils must have completed and submitted a KIC *(Key Information and Consent)* form to participate. Any pupil who has not submitted a KIC form to the school office by Friday 2nd September will be unable to take part and will remain in school attending normal lessons. Blank forms can be obtained from the school reception. Pupils will be informed how to register and download their ticket for the event during PSE class. Please ensure pupils are wearing full school uniform and that they are in possession of any required medication such as inhalers, epipens etc. More information about the event can be found here: https://www.ucas.com/events/edinburgh-ucas-exhibition-2022-403966



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Regards
Christopher Santini

School improvement plan link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-23-St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Improv-Plan.pdf
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MONDAY, 22 AUGUST 2022

Good Morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parent briefing for Monday 22nd August.

1. **Thank you:** Thank you all for supporting your children with a great start to the term. St Thomas of Aquin's experienced a very calm and productive 3 days of learning last week and I hope we continue to build on supporting your child's wellbeing, progress in learning, and their best possible achievement.

2. **SQA results**: I have shared with all staff the initial National Qualifications passes document and I have shared with Curricular Leaders a draft Faculty results document. I will combine these 2 documents into one initial SQA National Qualifications results attachment and email to all parents next Monday (29th August). I will be meeting with members of The Parent Council regarding the school's attainment on Friday 26th August.

3. **School improvement plan**: Please find attached the school improvement plan. I met with members of the Parent Council last Friday to discuss how parents can support the school and I hope this will be an agenda item at the first Parent Council meeting in September.

4. **Staffing**: I will be interviewing for a temporary Physical Education Teacher on Wednesday, 14th August.

5. **The Future of Qualifications & Assessments in Scotland:** Professor Louise Hayward's independent review on Scottish assessment and qualifications will support schools and colleges with opportunities to participate in the review and I have offered this leadership role to a staff member. It will involve collating staff, pupils, and parents' views. I will be back in touch next week with an update

6. **Welcome To/Welcome Back to Parents/Carers Social - Thursday 8 September - 17:30-19:30**. This will be a great social event and an opportunity for parents/carers to meet each and for many parents to have their first opportunity to come into the school. We will use the outside picnic tables and school hall and there will be light refreshments available. All are welcome.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 23 MAY 2022

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for week beginning Monday 23rd May

1. **Empowered Learning:** Please find the Empowered Learning presentation from a meeting that the St Thomas of Aquin's ICT working group attended on Wednesday 18th May. St Thomas of Aquin's will hopefully receive the pupil iPads week beginning 12-16th September.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking:** The final S1-S3 Tracking reports for this session will be completed by Friday 27th May and handed out to pupils in the first week in June.

3. **S3 Year Head**: Ms Mariani has taken over from Madame Jean-Pierre as S3 Year Head as of Monday 23rd May.

4. **Parents' evenings 2022-23:** The Senior Leadership Team would like the school community to consider 2 options:
   - **All S1-S6 Parents Evenings face to face** (S1-S3 Parents Evenings will take place over 2 consecutive evenings)
   - **S1-S3 Parents Evenings face to face** (and taking place over consecutive evenings) and **S4-S6 Parents Evenings Remote** (Video calls using iPads).

   I will be discussing this with the Parent Council on Thursday

5. **S1-S6 pupil survey analysis:** Please find the pupil survey analysis attached. Thank you to all the staff at St Thomas of Aquin's for their support of your children, our pupils.

6. **Ascension Thursday May 26th**: S1-S2 Mass on Thursday 26th May at The Sacred Heart.

7. **2022-23 Timetable:** The 2022-23 timetable will start on **Monday 6th June**.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 16 MAY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the HT briefing email week beginning Monday 16th May

1. **Staffing:** Ms Berthelot will be leaving St Thomas of Aquins at the end of June 2022. Ms Berthelot has been an outstanding colleague at St Thomas of Aquin's supporting pupil achievement and attainment in The Modern Languages Faculty. Ms Berthelot will be greatly missed. I will be advertising a permanent 0.5 FTE Modern language post in due course.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking:** The final S1-S3 Tracking reports for this session will be completed by Friday 27th May and handed out to pupils in the first week in June.

3. **School recovery analysis and improvement planning**: I have started the Draft 2021-22 Standards and Quality report (an analysis of how the school is progressing with its school improvement plan) which will be shared with staff and parents in August. I will continue to share with staff and parents draft themes for our school improvement plan for the next 3 years.

    - HWB policy
    - BGE CfE Levels accuracy and sharing good practice
    - BrBbBl policy update – ASD pupils & all colleagues
    - Pupil Voice – Faculty planning
    - Attainment checklist to be circulated and used
    - ICT/Mobile phone policy
    - CP Folders update
    - Environmental/sustainability plan
    - Lunchtime and Afterschool clubs market place
    - PRD linked to school and staff improvement
    - Vision and Values survey

4. **Ascension Thursday May 26th**: Mr Wotherspoon and I have started to plan for a S1-S2 Mass on Thursday 26th May at The Sacred Heart.

5. **Staff and Parent survey:** Please find the staff and parent survey returns to support planning for the 2022-23 Parents Evenings. I would welcome 2 to 3 parents to meet with me in person to support how the school community plan Parents Evenings for session 2022-23. Please contact me to arrange a meeting by the end of May.

6. **Congratulations**:

To Olivier Esingle S2, in his achievement of being selected for Scotland U14 basketball team and is competing in the Tri-Nations Tournament in Dundee 13-15th May against England and Wales.
To Ethan Velpula (guitar) who was our entry to the Edinburgh Young Musician of the Year.

7. **St Thomas of Aquins' Parent Council - AGM - Thursday 26th May 18:30-20:30:** Come and find out what we have been doing over the past year at the Parent Council and the great collaborative work we do with the school. Our meeting will also include electing our Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. If you are interested in putting yourself forward please email stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com by 23 May. If you'd like to attend the meeting which takes place on MS Teams, email us at the email above and we will send you the meeting details. All are welcome and we hope you will join us. St. Thomas of Aquin's High School Parent Council All parents welcome

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY, 9 MAY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 9th May

3. **Staffing:** I will be advertising a part-time permanent PSL position (0.15 FTE) during the month of May.

4. **Congratulations:** Kianna Coertze (S2) competed in the Scottish National Age Group Championships (SNAGS) 2022 held at the Tollcross International Swimming Centre in Glasgow (April). Kianna won 11 Gold medals, 1 silver medal and 3 Bronze medals. Congratulations Kianna!

5. **School recovery analysis and improvement planning**: I will continue to share with parents draft themes for our school improvement plan for the next 3 years. Ms Mariani will be sending out a Parent survey focussing on Parents Evenings to staff and to parents. Our Draft improvement themes which will be added to our school improvement plan so far are:

   - HWB policy
   - BGE CfE Levels accuracy and sharing good practice
   - BrBbBl policy update – ASD pupils & all colleagues
   - Pupil Voice – Faculty planning
   - Attainment checklist to be circulated and used
   - ICT/Mobile phone policy
   - CP Folders update
   - Environmental/sustainability plan
   - Lunchtime and Afterschool clubs market place

6. **Saroj Lal Award**: The fantastic work of our Equality Group has been recognised with a nomination for the **Saroj Lal Award**:. The following pupils are invited to an awards ceremony on Thursday 23rd June, 5-7pm in Edinburgh City Centre. The following pupils have been nominated:

   For their contribution to the Equality Group
   - Netsi Morant Valentin
   - Lucia Demitri von Pezold
   - Tamanna Rawat
   - Sarah Al-Dubai

   For their poetry entry
   - Julia Broadwood
   - Coral Cresswell

7. The City Of Edinburgh Council has set up a group for parents/carers of pupils with additional support needs (ASN) in mainstream schools. Each school has a rep on this group and issues discussed include digital learning and pathways to support. If you would like to contact the representative on this group, please email us at admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk. Please also let us know if you would be

interested in being part of a group of parents/carers of pupils with ASN at St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School or being the representative on this group in future."

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 24 APRIL 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School,

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a relaxing Easter holiday. Please find the parent briefing email for week beginning Monday 25th April.

On Friday 29th April, Amanda Hatton (Director of Education) and Lorna French, (Acting Head of Schools) will be visiting St Thomas of Aquin's. The focus is to meet with the Senior Leadership Team at 2.00pm to discuss school renewal and improvement.

1. **Health and Safety:** Staff and pupils at St Thomas of Aquin's will continue to wear face coverings in corridors and at break and lunchtimes. I am also asking staff and pupils to continue to sanitise their hands upon entering and exiting the school building and all classroom/learning areas. The school's Health and Safety Team will continue to meet every second week on Thursdays.

2. **Staffing:** Congratulations To Ms. Moreno who is the successful candidate in permanent Support for Learning Teacher post interviews. I will be advertising a temporary internal Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy post this week with the hope of appointing very soon to support tranistion.

3. **Spring Concert YouTube clips:**
   - Orchestra: https://youtu.be/U2Ous-WYQk0 & https://youtu.be/9UFaOKZmGXw
   - Percussion ensemble: https://youtu.be/zBUmO4_ud1s
   - String ensemble: https://youtu.be/e7s6t4O1ksk
   - Guitar ensemble: https://youtu.be/4Wb_QpqqeKc
   - Clarsach ensemblehttps://youtu.be/Cbnf19gKzOM

4. **In-service Tuesday 3rd May:** A reminder to parents that Monday 2nd May is school holiday and that Tuesday the 3rd of May is an in-service day. All S1-S3 pupils will return to school on Wednesday 4th of May.

   You will find attached a summary of the S1-S3 parent survey returns. I would like to thank the 80 S1-S3 parents who completed the survey. Along with the S4-S6 parent survey analysis and the forthcoming S1-S6 pupil survey analysis the school has a number of themes to support improvement planning for next session and beyond. I will continue to share improvement themes and how the school has identified these themes to ensure you know you voices are being heard and acted upon at St Thomas of Aquin's.

5. **Developing the School Playground**: Members of the Parent Council and the Senior Leadership Team met on Friday 1st April to discuss how the school community can work together to make the outside area of the

school building as engaging as possible of pupils. If parents are interested in helping with this project then please do contact the Parent Council. A MS Teams Forms has been sent to all pupils to ensure their voices are heard and I hope that a plan and a community team can be formed to support getting this right for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

6. **Duke of Edinburgh**: Senior pupils completed their Silver qualifying expedition prior to the Easter holidays in freezing conditions. Congratulations to:

Calum	Beech Brandt
Marysia	Bilda
Juliet	Boardman
Emily	Broadwood
Rona	Cagritekin
Niamh	Mulcahy
Elena	Muyo De Bonrostro
Anna	Perry
Rona	Sherry
Hannah	Sony

7. **Congratulations:** To Griffin Manning who competed in 4 events at the Scottish Youth Championships, winning medals in 3 of them.

   - Silver in U15 Men's Sabre.
   - Bronze in U17 Men's Sabre.
   - Bronze in U15 Men's Foil.

8. Tomorrow is the last day for S6 pupils and they have been given the privilege of a specially arranged morning Assembly from 9.00-10.00am. They will then leave the school building to prepare for their SQA exams. I am expecting the highest standards of full school uniform and behaviour for this impressive year group.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY, 4 APRIL 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the email briefing for Monday 4th April

1. **1:1 iPad update:** St Thomas of Aquin's will receive the S1-S6 pupil iPads week beginning Monday 12th September 2022. Prior to the delivery of iPads to pupils, St Thomas will review its ICT device policy and work with pupils, parents, and staff to update how all devices (including mobile phones) are to be used in the school. I would like to thank members of the Parent Council who are keen to co-plan this policy so we get this right for all stakeholders in our school community.

2. **Staffing**: I am pleased to report that Mr Jed Case will be joining us in August as our permanent Craft and Design Teacher. Mrs Bendall and I will be interviewing for the permanent Support for Learning teacher post on Monday 4th April.

3. **SQA Estimates**: Thanks to all staff for completing the S4-S6 SQA Estimates. All S4-S6 Pupils and parents should now have these important National Qualification judgements. Please contact the school admin team if you have not received these - Admin@st-thomasaquins.edin.sch.uk.

4. **May SQA Study Leave**: Ms Mariani has completed a draft St Thomas Meaningful May Timetable for S4 pupils who sit 4 National 5 Qualifications or less and for S5 pupils who will be in the school during May. We hope to share this TT with parents prior to the 8th of April.

5. **Congratulations to the Physical Education Faculty and our pupils as we get back to competitive Basketball matches at St Thomas:**

The S1 Team drew 20-20 with George Heriots.
The S3 Team 39-29 against George Heriots.
The Senior Team lost 75-28 to George Heriots.

6. **Spring Concert:** A huge thanks to Ms Patrick and all of our visiting Music Teachers for their support with the Spring Concert on Thursday afternoon (31st March). Our pupils were excellent and a video has been recorded and will be shared with staff, pupils, and parents via YouTube…and placed on the school website.

   Scottish Young Musician Competition: We would like to invite interested pupils to register a note of interest with the music department by Tuesday, 5th April. Prospective participants will then be asked to submit a video solo performance recording by 29th April. One Edinburgh schools pupil will then be chosen by an independent adjudicator and will be put forward for the final competition which will take place on 29th May at RCS. The Scottish winner of the **Solo Performer of the Year** will receive a unique trophy designed and donated by Alexander Stoddart. They will also have the opportunity to work, play and learn with some world class musicians with links to music colleges, so if you're considering a career in music this is ideal for you!

7. **Developing the School Playground**: Members of the Parent Council and the Senior Leadership Team met on Friday, 1st April to discuss how the school community can work together to make the outside area of the school building as engaging as possible of pupils. If parents are interested in helping with this project then please do contact the Parent Council. A MS Teams forms will be sent to all pupils later on this week to ensure their voices are heard and I hope that a plan and a community team can be formed to support getting this right for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 28 MARCH 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing for Monday 28th March

1. **Health and Safety**: Please find attached a letter from Jason Leitch.

2. **Staffing**: The Senior Leadership Team will continue to interview for the following posts – 1 permanent Support for Learning Teacher post; and 1 temporary Pupil Support Assistant post. The permanent Craft Design Technology interviews are taking place on Monday 28th March.
   Congratulations gain to Ms Anna Walmsley in becoming our permanent Pupil Support Officer for the Wellbeing Hub.

3. **SQA Estimates**: Staff have now completed the S4-S6 SQA Estimates. Curricular Leaders are quality assuring these Estimates along with myself and Ms Mariani. S4-S6 pupils will be receiving their Estimates on Friday 1st April.

4. **Draft Attainment checklist 2022**-23: Please find a draft attainment timeline that I would like to introduce into how the Senior Leadership Team and The Leadership Team support quality assuring pupil attainment from next session. Please get back to me with your thoughts.

5. **S1 Parents Evening**: S1 Parents evening will take place via telephone calls on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th March.

6. **May SQA Study Leave**: St Thomas are drafting a Meaningful May Timetable for S4 pupils who sit 4 National 5 Qualifications or less and for S5 pupils who will be in the school during May. The Senior Leadership Team hope to share the draft Meaningful May Timetable plan with parents and pupils by the end of Term.

7. **Easter Revision classes (MS Teams) :** Please find attached the Easter revision MS Teams experiences for S4-S6 pupils.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY,22 MARCH 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for the week beginning Monday 21st March:

8. **Staffing**: I am very pleased to confirm that Ms Teagles is St Thomas of Aquin's permanent Pupil Support Officer. The Senior Leadership Team will continue to interview for the following posts – 1 permanent Pupil Support Officer post; 1 permanent Pupil Support Assistant post; 1 permanent Support for Learning Teacher post; and 1 temporary Pupil Support Assistant post.

   The permanent Craft Design Technology advert closed on Friday 18th March.

9. **Draft Ethos and Equalities policy**: Please find the draft 2022 Ethos & Equalities policy update. The school is close to completing the review process and welcomes staff and parents' final views.

10. **Lunchtime and After School Clubs at St Thomas of Aquin's:** Please find an extensive list of clubs at lunchtime and after school on the website here - https://st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2022/01/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Clubs-2.pdf

11. **2030 Climate strategy:** The school renewal plan for 2022-25 will have a climate strategy focus and at the Parent Council meeting on Thursday 24th March I hope we can discuss our planning strategy further.

12. **May SQA Study Leave**: I plan to meet with Ms Mariani week beginning, Monday 21st March to discuss how Faculties will support a Meaningful May experience for S4-S6 pupils. This will be an agenda item on the Leadership Team meeting on Thursday 24th March.

13. **S4-S6 Parents & Carers' Survey – Analysis and Next Steps**: Please find the S4-S6 parents survey return analysis. There are some very good areas for the school to celebrate and I thank every St Thomas colleague for their support of our pupils.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY,14 MARCH 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for week beginning Monday 14th March

1. **SQA Estimates**: S4-S6 Estimates will be shared with pupils prior to the end of term.

- **By Wednesday 23rd March:** Teachers complete S4-S6 Estimates in Seemis Tracking and Monitoring.
- **By Friday 25th March:** CLs complete QA of Estimates.
- **By Wednesday 30th March:** SLT complete QA of Estimates.
- **On Friday 1st April:** S4-S6 pupils receive a letter with their SQA Estimates.

2. **Staffing**: Interviews for the following posts will be carried out prior to the end of term: 2 permanent Pupil Support Officer posts; 1 permanent Pupil Support Assistant post; 1 permanent Support for Learning Teacher post; and 1 temporary Pupil Support Assistant post.

   Ms Zikou has started her Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub and Sensory Room and will be presenting the vision of the Wellbeing Hub and Sensory Room to all staff at the May in-service and the shared with the school community.

   St Thomas did not receive enough applications for a Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy longleet interview. Once I have decided next steps I will be back in communication with staff and parents.

3. **Draft curriculum policy:** Please find the draft 2022 Curriculum **policy** on the school website: https://st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/. Please do get back to me with your thoughts on the policy update.

4. **Lunchtime and Afterschool clubs at St Thomas of Aquin's:** I met with Mr Murray and Mr Reid (Active Sports) last Tuesday for an update on St Thomas of Aquin's Lunchtime and Afterschool clubs. I'd like to extend my thanks to all staff and pupils who are supporting these clubs. To show my appreciation and my commitment to clubs I am asking colleagues and pupils to please come and speak with me if your club requires resources. Mr Murray and Mr Reid will update us all on pupil participation and how best to communicate our strategy to the school community.

   Please find the extensive list of clubs at lunchtime and after on the school website here - https://stthomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-School-Clubs-2.pdf

   Please also find attached the study support classes for S4-S6 pupils running up to the Easter holiday.

5. **On behalf of the Equality Group:** St Thomas of Aquin's is striving to support all pupils with an inclusive and diverse school ethos. We aim to empower learners to develop an understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others. From Wednesday 23rd – Friday 25th March The Equality Group will be hosting a series of events to celebrate the language and heritage of our staff and pupils. Events include, morning prayers in a range of languages; a poetry competition; Arabic language lesson and a Highland Dancing lesson to name but a few.

6. **2030 Climate strategy:** St Thomas now has a Climate Action Group with a strong pupil leadership group wishing to make real impact in our school. Dr Bogomazova supports the Climate Action Group and will continue to help shape our vision up to 20230 and beyond. I would like to thank Mrs Phillips who met with me on Friday afternoon to discuss Edinburgh's 2030 Climate Strategy https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/2030-Climate-Strategy#:~:text=The%202030%20Climate%20Strategy%20sets,to%20live%20and%20work%20in
   The school renewal plan for 2022-25 will have a climate strategy focus and at the Parent Council meeting on the 24th March I hope we can discuss our planning strategy further.

7. **May SQA Study Leave**: The City of Edinburgh have developed guidance for study leave that will shape what will happen at all Edinburgh Secondary schools from **26th April onwards**. St Thomas of Aquin's will have to plan for the short-term for this session and then strategically look at delivering the best learning experience and outcomes for pupils and staff in the long-term. Please take time to read the information below regarding the guiding principles and the specific allocations for S4, S5, and S6 pupils.

Guiding principles:

- The foundation for schools, learning establishments and education authorities is a focus on positive relationships and an inclusive ethos and culture that promotes **excellent attendance.**
- All young people have **the right** to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential
- Our learners are undertaking **a portfolio of SCQF qualifications that may include exambased and coursework-only elements**, and at its core is parity of esteem.
- **Authorised absence for Study Leave during the SQA exam period should be proportionate**. Therefore, ongoing attendance to access appropriate support and teaching input may be necessary to fulfil course requirements e.g. FA work placements, College courses.
- **Absence for Study Leave outside the official SQA exam period would be unauthorised** e.g. no 'Prelim Leave' (This will apply to all Secondary Schools from Session 2022).

S4	Learners with 5 or more NQ exams	Learners with 4 or less NQ exams	Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Each NQ exam will have total of 3 days authorised absence for study leave and attendance will be registered on the day of the NQ exam (total of 4 days allocated to each NQ exam) • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

	Study Leave Allocation during SQA Exam period	Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
S5	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. study area, digital access, teacher input) • As a guide for learners with range of qualifications (exam-based and coursework) or flexible timetable schools could authorise 4 days absence for study leave per NQ exam i.e. total of 5 days allocated to each NQ exam	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Study Leave Allocation during SQA Exam period		Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
S6	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Following on from the above information **S4-S6 pupils will start their targeted study leave from Wednesday 27th April,** with **Tuesday 26th April being the last day for many pupils in school**.

S6 pupils will be allowed into school from 9.00-10.00 on Tuesday 26th April for an assembly led by the Pupil Support Team. S4 and S5 year groups will have assemblies latter on in the day (Lesson 7) and will be allowed to leave after the assemblies.

As Headteacher I must ensure that all pupils experience the best learning experiences every day and this includes Tuesday 26th April. I am specifically asking S6 pupils and parents of S6 pupils to support the following high expectations:

1. All S6 pupils must attend school in full uniform – white shirt, school tie, black trousers or skirts, black V-neck jumper or S6 Leavers Hoodie, and black shoes.
2. All S6 pupils must attend school in a healthy and safe manner which I hope includes a healthy and safe breakfast. I will put in place support for any pupil whom I have concerns with which will focus on contacting their parents to pick them up from school as well as support and advice from the school community Police Officer.
3. I am asking that S6 pupils bring in no bags into the building. There is no need as the Assembly is one hour long. I am asking S6 pupils to be responsible in what they bring into school and how they conduct themselves in the school building.
5. In the past I have had to discuss with S6 pupils and their parents participation at the school Prom due to unacceptable and risk-taking behaviour. I hope that I do not have to do this with such an impressive S6 year group who have excelled in their attainment, achievement, and support for St Thomas' over the last 6 years and coped so admirably in such challenging pandemic mitigations.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY,7 March 2022

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for Monday 7th of March

1. **Health and Safety:**
   Please find the updated St Thomas' Covid-19 changes to school culture document. The document will be placed on the school website.

2. **Supporting Ukrainian families**: I would like encourage all staff and all pupils to bring appropriate children's clothing into school thisweek. Clothing can be kept in The Chaplaincy Room until we can taxi it up to the Edinburgh Ukraine Club in Royal Terrace. If you intend on bringing clothing can you place it in a bag with a sticker or message detailing the age and gender of the clothing. As a school community, let us show our compassion through as generous a collection as possible. Please bring clothing to the RE Faculty in the first instance.

3. **School Uniform**: St Thomas of Aquin's handed out new branded School Hoodies, Zoodies and V-neck jumpers last week supporting pupils to wear our school uniform. If you would like to purchase these items then please visit the BE uniforms website below- Embroidered Schoolwear & Clubwear (borderembroideries.co.uk). I have ordered more uniform clothing to continue to support our pupils.

Embroidered Schoolwear & Clubwear - Border Embroideries
Border Embroideries supplies schools and clubs throughout the UK and beyond with customised embroidered clothing.
www.border-embroideries.co.uk

4. **HWB census**: Please find a letter for all parents and pupils regarding the S1-S6 Health & Wellbeing Census. Pupils can complete the census from the 3rd week in March. Madame Jean-Pierre will contacting parents with dates for the Census completion.

5. **Study Leave**: The City of Edinburgh, along with a group of secondary Headteachers, have developed guidance for study leave that will shape what will happen from 26 April onwards. I would imagine that this will be an agenda item at the next Parent Council.

   Guiding principles:
   The foundation for schools, learning establishments and education authorities is a focus on positive relationships and an inclusive ethos and culture that promotes **excellent attendance.**
   All young people have **the right** to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential.
   Our learners are undertaking **a portfolio of SCQF qualifications that may include exam-based and coursework-only elements**, and at its core is parity of esteem.

Authorised absence for Study Leave during the SQA exam period should be proportionate. Therefore, ongoing attendance to access appropriate support and teaching input may be necessary to fulfil course requirements e.g. FA work placements, College courses.

Absence for Study Leave <u>outside</u> the official SQA exam period would be unauthorised e.g. no 'Prelim Leave' (This will apply to all Secondary Schools from Session 2022).

S4	Learners with 5 or more NQ exams	Learners with 4 or less NQ exams	Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Each NQ exam will have total of 3 days authorised absence for study leave and attendance will be registered on the day of the NQ exam (total of 4 days allocated to each NQ exam) • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

S4	Learners with 5 or more NQ exams	Learners with 4 or less NQ exams	Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Each NQ exam will have total of 3 days authorised absence for study leave and attendance will be registered on the day of the NQ exam (total of 4 days allocated to each NQ exam) • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

Study Leave Allocation during SQA Exam period		Other SCQF qualifications e.g. NPA, SVQ
S6	• Absence can be authorised for full period of study leave during SQA exams • Attendance registered on day of NQ exam • School will provide each learner with individualised timetable for period of SQA exams outlining days of attendance and days of study leave • Learners who require support can continue to attend school (e.g. access to study area or IT, teacher input)	• Learners expected to complete coursework for other SCQF qualifications • Attendance at College, school or work placement may be required.

6. **SQA Estimates**: S4-S6 Estimates will be shared with pupils prior to the end of term. Similar to last year, SQA Estimates will be shared with pupils with enough time for pupils to liaise with their Teachers. Ms Mariani is working on a timeline, however we believe the following is a workable solution

- **By Wednesday 23 March:** Teacher complete S4-S6 Estimates in Seemis – Tracking and Monitoring
- **By Friday 25 March: CLs complete QA of Estimates**
- **By Wednesday 30 March:** SLT complete QA of Estimates
- **On Friday 1 April:** S4-S6 pupils receive a letter with their SQA Estimates

4. **Staffing**: St Thomas of Aquin's are advertising for a number of posts during March: 2 permanent Pupil Support Officer posts, 1 permanent Pupil Support Assistant post, a permanent Support for Learning Teacher post, and a temporary Pupil Support Assistant post.

5. **Daily Key Adult Time**: St Thomas' will be returning to Key Adult classes as of the 1st of June and increase the time from 20 minutes to 50 minutes. Daily Key Adult Time will take place at the start of each day from 8.40-8.50. Timings of lessons 1 and 3 will be adapted to support DKAT and the focus for Staff/Key Adults will be on attendance, uniform, supporting learning conversations, and a developing a universal nurturing and pastoral relationship with their pupils.

6. **The Pupil Parliament** are having their third meeting on **Friday 11th March, Period 4** in the main hall. This is open to all pupils to attend but they must register with their teacher at the beginning of Period 4 before attending.

7. **S4 and S5 coursing:** S4 and S5 coursing is being completed this week. Please find the draft curriculum on the school website: https://st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/policies-documents/. Please do get back to me with your thoughts on the policy update.

8. **Congratulations:**
   S6 Mark MacKay: Congratulations to Mark for representing U18 1872 Edinburgh Rugby win against Glasgow in Melrose on last Sunday. The previous Sunday Mark was in the regional winning Edinburgh Team against Scottish Borders, Glasgow, and The North. Mark is making a name for himself as a very successful Flanker – watch out Mish. Well done Mark!

   S5 Emily Broadwood: Congratulations to Emily and her Curling team colleague who came 3rd in the Edinburgh U21 Mixed Doubles last weekend. It's the Olympic format and was open to players from across Scotland. Emily is part of the Scottish Curling Academy, the feeder squad into the Elite athletes programme. Well done Emily!

   S2 Oskar Koloszeij: Congratulations to Oskar on becoming the U14 Scottish Gymnast Champion. Well done Oskar!

   S3 Carrie Granados and Imani Sykes for competing in BCA's Cheerleading Competition and being awarded 1st place for level 1 Junior at the weekend, with their cheerleading team Capital All Stars. There routine Both girls are also involved in the cheerleading club at St Thomas of Aquin's. Well done Carrie and Imani!

   I am meeting with Mr Murray to explore our project to support lunchtime and afterschool clubs and share in our pupils successes through an achievement wall in the school and a dedicated achievement page on the school website.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for Monday 28 February

1. **Health and Safety:**

   - Pupils will no longer wear face masks in classrooms however if Teachers wish to speak with pupils at their desks then asking pupils to put on their facemasks is appropriate and pupils ought to put on facemasks. Pupils will have to leave classrooms with facemasks on as it is still Scottish Government Guidance to wear them in corridors do so and I am asking all staff to ensure pupils are wearing face masks prior to pupils leaving the classrooms. Can parents please speak with their children regarding supporting Scottish Government advice.

   - Staggered starts and ends of the day will finish. This means that from today, Monday 28 February, **all pupils** will be allowed into the school building from **8.15am** and **all pupils will leave at 3.30** once the bell has sounded. Bells at 8.38 and 8.40 will continue to support pupils arriving on time to lesson 1 and the Bells at 10.40, 1.50, and 3.30 will continue. The main hall will be in use for breakfast club from 8.15am.

   - During break and lunchtime pupils will be allowed to use the main hall and classrooms and corridors. We are all aware that there is only seating for around 300 pupils and so supporting S4-S6 pupils in classrooms and corridors will continue.

   - Assemblies are allowed and this will support Pupil Support Leaders, Depute Head Teachers and myself to meet effectively with pupils.

2. **School Uniform**: School uniform is not only an important unifying practice for our pupils but it also supports the safety of pupils and staff in a city centre school. St Thomas of Aquin's now has a new school uniform supplier, www.borderembroideries.co.uk/search/st%20thomas%20of%20aquins%20high?amnoroute.

   I would like school pupils to move away from wearing branded black jumpers to only St Thomas of Aquin's branded school jumpers of Hoodies and the school has bought a significant amount of tops to support pupils who continue to wear non-uniform jumpers.

3. **Homestudy Audit:** As part of the school renewal plan for 2021-2024, St Thomas of Aquin's will be auditing Homestudy in the school and developing a Homestudy policy that will align itself with the introduction of iPads for all pupils and staff. During the month of March, all Faculties will complete a Homestudy audit which I will share with the Parent Council on Thursday 24th March.

4. **S4 Parents Evening**: S4 Parents evening will take place on Monday 28 February and Tuesday 1 March via telephone calls.

5. **Staffing**: Mr Herbison will be retiring from St Thomas of Aquin's this year and it is with a heavy heart that I have accepted his request. Mr Herbison is such a caring and supportive colleague and Teacher at our school and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him over the last 9 years. He will be a big miss! I will be advertising a permanent post for Craft Design technology Teacher shortly. The Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy advert closes on Monday 28th February.

6. **Daily Key Adult Time**: St Thomas' will be returning to Key Adult classes as of the 1st of June and increase the time from 20 minutes to 50 minutes. Daily Key Adult Time will take place at the start of each

day from 8.408.50. Timings of lessons 1 and 3 will be adapted to support DKAT and the focus for Staff/Key Adults will be on attendance, uniform, supporting learning conversations, and a developing a universal nurturing and pastoral relationship with their pupils. Isabelle will be supporting our return to Daily Key Adult classes during the summer term.

7. **The Pupil Parliament** are having their third meeting on **Friday 11 March, Period 4** in the main hall. This is open to all pupils to attend but they must register with their teacher at the beginning of Period 4 before attending. If this meeting clashes with any assessments or trips, can you, please let me know.

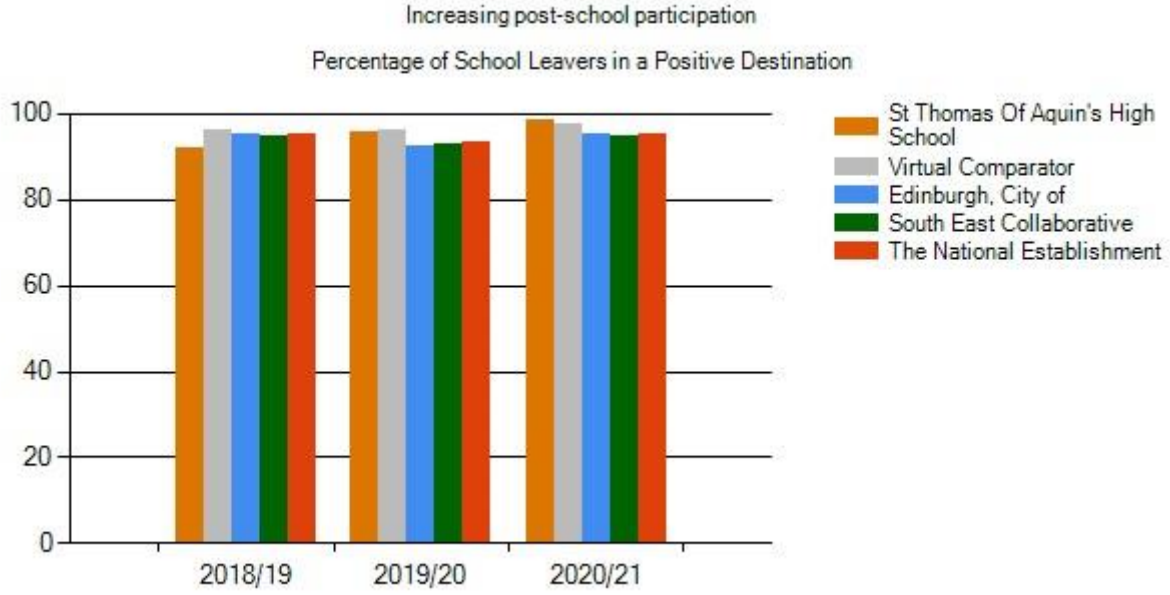
8. **Ash Wednesday:** Please find attached the planning for Ash Wednesday. I would like the St Thomas of Aquin's school community to support the humanitarian catastrophe that is occurring in Ukraine during Lent. I will be asking the S6 Caritas Team and Mr Wotherspoon to identify the best support charity communication with Ukraine to support its citizens.

9. **Aberdeen Medic Outreach Society**: I would like to thank former Headboy Michael Gray who emailed me last week with the following link to support any pupil interested in a Medical career. The Aberdeen Medic Outreach Society are hosting an info night on MS teams with tips for applications and general information about the application process on March 10th from 5-7pm. The link to the Facebook event page is below and he has attached a picture with some info about content of the talk. https://facebook.com/events/s/amos-medical-applicantevening/278833130988634/.

10. I am also pleased to inform parents that the Attainment and Outcomes sub-group are thinking of starting a former pupil alumni group and although I don't believe work on this has started, I hope this communication will start the process.

11. **Climate Action Group**: I am very pleased to report that over 50 pupils will be taking part in the Climate Change course delivered by the KEEP SCOTLAND BEAUTIFUL today. Thank you to Dr Bogomazova who has planned this experience for our pupils.

12. **The 2020-21 February Leavers destinations** has just gone live in Insight and I am very pleased to show that St
Thomas' has a 98.41% positive destination. This is a tremendous effort by all colleagues. I would like to thank Ms Mariani, Madame Jean-Pierre, the Integrated support team and Clare Alexander (SDS) for their strategic support for our pupils.



Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

I hope that you and your families have had some time together and enjoyed the February week? Time seems to be moving rather fast and the Easter holidays, which start on Friday, 8 April, are only 7 weeks away. For S4-S6 pupils these 7 weeks are so important to engage in the very best learning and teaching the school provides to maximize their National Qualifications outcomes.

1. **Health and Safety:** You may be aware that as of Monday, 28 February pupils will continue to sanitize their hands entering and exiting the school building and classrooms, and all pupils will continue to wear face masks in the school corridors. A major change from next week will be pupils not wearing face masks once seated in classrooms. I will be in touch with all parents regarding any further updates in next Monday's parent briefing. I am asking all parents to support their children, our pupils, in following the Scottish Government guidance.

2. **School Uniform**: School uniform is not only an important unifying practice for our pupils but it also supports the safety of pupils and staff in a City Centre school. St Thomas of Aquin's now has a new school uniform supplier, www.borderembroideries.co.uk/search/st%20thomas%20of%20aquins%20high?amnoroute, and I am asking parents to support pupils wearing full school uniform every day: a St Thomas of Aquin's labelled black school jumper or black school-labelled Hoodie, a school tie and white shirt, and either school trousers (not jeans) or a school shirt, and black shoes.

   I would like school pupils to move away from wearing branded black jumpers to only St Thomas of Aquin's branded school jumpers of Hoodies and I have asked Ms Mariani to buy an assortment of school uniform to support pupils who are not in full school uniform.

3. **S3 into S4 course choice sheets completion**: St Thomas' hopes to have all S3 pupils completing their course choices before the end of February. Please find the S3 into S4 course choice information on the school's website homepage: https://st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/

   Please also find the school's draft 2022-25 curriculum policy here which will help all parents and pupils plan for the curriculum experiences the school can offer: https://st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2022/02/St-Thomas-of-Aquins-RC-High-School-Curriculum-Policy-Updated-Jan-2022

13. **Homestudy Audit:** As part of the school renewal plan for 2021-2024, St Thomas of Aquin's will be auditing Homestudy in the school and developing a Homestudy policy that will align itself with the introduction of iPads for all pupils and staff. During the month of March, all Faculties will complete a Homestudy audit which I will share with the Parent Council on Thursday, 24 March.

14. **S4 Parents Evening**: S4 Parents evening will take place on Monday, 28 February and Tuesday, 1 March via telephone calls.

15. **HT Assemblies:** Parents and pupils may remember that I led a series of Assemblies for all pupils on Equalities and Inclusion in September 2021. I will be revisiting these themes along with standards and uniform in March.

16. **Staffing**: The Curricular Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy advert closes on Monday, 28 February. I will be asking the Chair of the Parent Council to identify a parent who will help in the longleet interviewing for this crucial post.

17. **S6 pupils**: S6 pupils will be allowed to wear their S6 Leavers Hoodies from Monday 21 February. I will be asking Ms Mariani and the Pupil Support Leaders to meet with the S6 Year group about their last day
in school (probably Monday, 25 April) and how essential it is for all pupils to be respectful of the learning environment that day and how essential it will be for S6 pupils to be conscious of their health and safety responsibilities.

I will be writing to S6 parents later this month regarding my commitment in ensuring that this day is a normal school day for S1-S5 pupils and the support of S6 parents and the school community Police Officer will be welcomed to help with whatever farewell the school can plan in terms of the Covid-19 regulations.

I wish all pupils and staff the very best start to the school week.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School, please find the parent briefing email for Monday 7th February

1. **Health and Safety:** Please remember that pupils should
   - use LFT tests (2 times a week)
   - wear (sustainable) face masks
   - sanitise hands • wear full uniform to school and pupils are allowed to wear outside jackets in the building.

   The next Health and Safety meeting will take place on Thursday 10th February Lesson 3.

2. **Staffing**: I will be interviewing 4 candidates for the Curricular Leader of The St Thomas of Aquin's Wellbeing Hub on Tuesday 8th February. Good luck to all candidates.

3. **Course choices 2022**: All S3 pupils and parents can complete course choices prior to the start of the February break by going to the school website using this link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/ and scrolling down to S3 into S4 coursing.

4. **S4-S6 Tracking**: S4-S6 Tracking will be handed out to pupils from Tuesday 8th February.

5. **S5&6 Parents Evening**: This will be taking place on Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th February from 5-7pm using telephone calls

6. **School renewal plan update**: Please find attached the school renewal update from Madame JeanPierre.

Please find attached a CEC parental survey letter and I do hope you and your families have a lovely February break. School restarts on Monday 21st February

Regards
Christopher Santini

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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2022

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the parents' email week beginning Monday 31st of January

2. **Health and Safety:** Please remember to
   - use LFT tests (2 times a week)
   - wear (sustainable) face masks
   - sanitise hands • wear full uniform to school and pupils are allowed to wear outside jackets in the building.

4. **Staffing**: The closing date for The Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub at St Thomas of Aquin's was on Thursday 27th of January. I hope to be interviewing candidates before the February break.

5. **Course choices 2022**: Madame Jean-Pierre will be contacting all S3 parents and pupils regarding the completion of Course Choices prior to the start of the February break. Course choice sheets can be found on the school website using this link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parentscarers/curriculum-for-excellence

   Thank you to the S2 pupils and parents in their completion of over 128 course choice sheets.

3. **SQA exams:** Please find attached the SQA exam timetable along with the SQA scenarios. It would appear that for St Thomas' pupils, the first SQA exam will take place on Wednesday 27th of April. This means we have 8 and a half school weeks until the first SQA exam if exams are going ahead without modifications. I will update the school community on SQA decisions.

7. **S4-S6 Tracking**: S4-S6 Tracking starts on Friday 21st of January and will be completed by 1st of February. The school hopes to hand out S4-S6 Tracking Reports week beginning Monday 7th of February.

8. **S5&6 Parents Evening**: This will be taking place on Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th of February from 5-7pm.

5. **Pupil Parliament**: The next Pupil Parliament will be held on Friday 4th of March. Ms Mariani will present the school's uniform updates (please see below).
   School uniform update: Please find the website address of Borders Embroidery website who will support St Thomas' parents ordering uniform in Edinburgh. A new St Thomas' Hoodie and Zoodie have been added to the uniform. www.border-embroideries.co.uk/search/st%20thomas%20of%20aquins%20high?amnoroute

6. **Curriculum policy:** Please find the draft Curriculum policy for St Thomas of Aquin's which has been updated for January 2022. Can parents get back to me if they wish to discuss or share their thoughts?

7. **Final drafts for both Higher and Nat 5 English are due in March.**

   The deadline for the Nat 5 folio is 2nd March: Some classes may have been set a different internal deadline which pupils should endeavour to meet. Pupils should complete their essay on the SQA template which can be found here https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47410.html in the **Coursework** section. The maximum word count for this piece of writing is 1000 and pupils should put the word count and any sources consulted on their essay. The folio is worth 30% of the final grade.

   The deadline for the Higher folio is 25th March: Some classes may have been set a different internal deadline which pupils should endeavour to meet. Pupils should complete their essay on the SQA template which can be found here https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47904.html in the **Coursework** section. The maximum word count for this piece of writing is 1300 and pupils should put the word count and any sources consulted on their essay. The folio is worth 30% of the final grade.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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MONDAY, 17 JANUARY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 17th January

1. **Health and Safety:** All pupils, staff, and parents in the school building should support infection control by using **LFT tests** (2 times a week and available for pick up in school during lunchtime and break), **wearing (sustainable) face masks**, and **sanitising their hands**. If pupils are feeling unwell and are showing signs of Covid-19 symptoms, they should remain at home and follow the NHS guidelines of self-isolating and testing.

   Pupil are to continue wearing full uniform to school and are allowed to wear outside jackets in the building.

   Can I ask all parents to speak with their children regarding bringing sustainable face masks to school and to support the wearing of face masks whilst in the school corridors.

2. **S1-S3 Tracking**: S1-S3 Tracking reports will be given to pupils on Wednesday 19th January.

3. **Staffing**: I am very pleased to confirm that Mrs Shahzad is now a permanent Pupil Support Assistant at St Thomas of Aquin's. I am advertising for a permanent Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub, advert closes on Thursday 27th January.

4. **Course choices for the 2022-23 TT**: Please find attached the course choice sheets for S2, S3, S4, and S5 pupils to support their subject choices for session 2022-23. These course choice sheets have been placed on the school website. S2 pupils and S3 pupils will be completing their course choices during January and up until the February break.

5. **S4-S5 information evening**: To support S3, S4, and S5 pupils with course choices there will be an MS Teams information evening on Thursday 27th January from 6.00-7pm.

6. **Virtual Christmas Concert** - please have a look at some of the pupil performances that have been uploaded at the following link, Well done to all pupils. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLg6YvrbIxyS435rmTsDFzWF-jtkQzJjDl. Orchestra rehearsals will continue on Tuesday lunchtimes, we are currently preparing for The Spring Concert.

7. **2022-23 Key Adult planning**: The senior leadership team will be meeting next week to discuss the return of Key Adult classes, if permitted, for session 2022-23.

8. **St Thomas of Aquin's ski team:** The Scottish Schools Ski Race is being held on Thursday 27th January 2022 and Mr Carruthers will be looking to take a team of 4 skiers to compete in this qualifying event at Glenshee Ski Centre. Go St Thomas'!

9. **Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquinas**: The Feast day of our Patron saint takes place on Friday 28th January and the school is planning for this special day. Please see the attachment.

Regards
Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 10 JANUARY 2022

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the staff briefing for Monday 10th January.

Health and Safety: All pupils, staff, and parents in the school building should support infection control by using **LFT tests** (2 times a week and available for pick up in school during lunchtime and break), **wearing (sustainable) face masks**, and **sanitising their hands**. If pupils are feeling unwell and are showing signs of Covid-19 symptoms, they should remain at home and follow the NHS guidelines of self-isolating and testing.

Staggered starts and finishes will remain in place: **S1** in at 8.30am, **S2** in at 8.32, **S3** in at 8.34, **S4** in at 8.36, **S5-6** in at 8.38. **S1-S3** will leave the school building at 3.25pm and **S4-S6** will leave on the bell at 3.30. When **entering classrooms** pupils should sanitise their hands & support the cleaning of desks.

At Break and Lunchtimes S1-S3 pupils can use the designated areas in the main hall – each year group has an area that they should sit. A change to break and lunchtime is now in place for S4-S6 pupils – I am asking S4-S6 pupils to either use Lesson 2 classrooms for Breaktime and Lesson 5 classrooms for Lunchtimes or to go outside. Please do not use the main hall or the PE area.

Classrooms will have one window open as well as the classroom door open. Pupils are allowed to wear a warm jacket over their full school uniform: **Black shoes, Black trousers/skirt (not Jeans of leggings)**, White shirt and tie, and Black non-logo jumper.



Edinburgh School Uniform Bank provides free new school uniform to children and young people who are referred by a professional who knows the family. This could be a teacher or support worker at school, a health visitor, a family support worker or social worker, a youth worker, a Maximise worker or someone similar. Please ask them to visit the website www.edinburghuniform.org to find out how to refer.

The Uniform Bank also provides batches of excellent quality nearly-new school uniform to schools and community groups for them to pass on to local families. This could be through a swap shop, a sharing rail, a pop-up uniform event or something similar, depending on Covid restrictions. Please ask your school, youth club or community group if they have a supply of nearly-new clothing or if they would like Edinburgh School Uniform Bank to support them with this.

As a registered charity, Edinburgh School Uniform Bank is independent from the Council and they rely on the support of local people and businesses. To find out how you can help by donating uniform or funds, volunteering or fundraising please visit www.edinburghuniform.org

S1-S3 Tracking: St Thomas of Aquin's hopes to complete S1-S3 Tracking this week, so quality assurance and printing can go and reports can be with families as soon as possible..

Staffing: I would like to welcome Anna Walmsley to St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School. Anna is one of our 2 Pupil Support Officers recruited at the end of last year and Ms Walmsley will be supporting the reopening of The Learning Nurture Hub. I will be advertising for a permanent Curricular Leader of The Wellbeing Hub for S1-S3 pupils which will be in place for the start of the 2022-23 session in August.

S4-S6 prelims: Good luck to all pupils and to staff for the start of the S4-S6 prelims (Friday 7th was the start with Art). A reminder that there is no prelim leave for pupils and that they should be attending their classes on days when they do not have a prelim. St Thomas will be planning for 3 "catch-up" prelim afternoons to be held after school on Fridays to support pupils who have been unable to attend their prelims due to medical issues. More details of this will be shared in next week's parental briefing.

Bus travel: From 31st January, 5–21 year olds living in Scotland will be eligible for free bus travel across Scotland with a valid National Entitlement Card. You can apply from **10th January 2022**. However, in light of high levels of COVID-19 transmission, the Scottish Government is asking that you only apply for the scheme at this point if it is essential* that you, or your child, travel while restrictions are in place. All other eligible applicants will be proactively encouraged to apply at a later date. *There is no prescribed list of what constitutes essential travel – it will differ for different children, young people and families. But it might include travel for education, training, work, care or health reasons .Even if your child already has a National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card, they must apply for a new or replacement card to travel by bus for free. You can visit the Transport Scotland website to find out how to apply and more.

CEC have provided links to a couple of videos with step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a NEC and free bus travel through getyournec.scot. These first videos look at the process for a parent/carer applying for a new card for their child aged 5-15, and for requesting a replacement card with travel for a child who already has a NEC. The links to these are below – please add the links to the letter below for parents/carers.

- How to apply for a card for your child: https://youtu.be/Ev_sEjprEDE
- How to request a replacement card with free bus travel: https://youtu.be/M7OgYZ3Fh5s

I wish you and your family a very productive week.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School,

Please find the staff briefing for Monday 13th December

1. **Health and Safety**: As you may have seen, there has been an update by the First Minister last week regarding Covid-19. The new outlined process for managing COVID-19 cases (both Omicron and Delta) for cases in school aged pupils is outlined below: Education/Under 18s

- contact tracing/processes for under 18s to go back to how this was being done for Delta (Warn and Inform Letter Process)
- key difference is that household contacts of positive COVID-19 cases (regardless of whether Omicron and Delta) must isolate for full 10 days regardless of age, vaccination, negative PCR test. If there is a case in the household/family, the rest of the household should isolate for the full 10 days.

It is important we all follow the current guidance in place - wearing face coverings where required, ventilate our classrooms, support the physical distancing between pupils and adults, and good hand hygiene. Please support the school community by taking regular lateral flow tests, you can find out where to get lateral flow and PCR tests on the NHS website. 2. **School renewal plan update**: Please find the December school renewal update from Stefania.

3. **Big Thank you to Staff at St Thomas**: The parent council raised a fantastic total of £1785 for the Christmas collection for staff. All 100 staff members will get a bag of presents from parents/carers/pupils which will be delivered on Monday 13th December. We hope to post up photos of the presents on Twitter. The school staff have worked hard over the past year to educate and support our pupils and the school's academic success has been recognised in the Sunday Times list of top 100 state schools in Scotland, St Thomas has risen to 17th in Scotland: https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/edinburgh-news/twoedinburgh-schools-top-ten-22351154.amp.

   We want to thank all the staff at the school for all their efforts and we at the parent council wish all of you a good and peaceful festive break. St. Thomas of Aquin's High School Parent Council.

4. **End of term planning**: The school will close at 12 noon on Friday 17th December.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parent briefing email for Monday 6th December

1. **Health and Safety**: With 2 weeks until the end of term it is so important that the school community continue to suppress Covid19 by:

   - Wearing face masks throughout the building
   - Sanitising hands when entering the school and its classrooms and exiting the building and classrooms
   - Pupils keeping physically distanced from adults and where possible being outside at break and lunchtime

5. **Staffing**: Interviews for 2 Pupil Support Assistants will take place on Tuesday 7th December.

6. **Christmas Collection for Staff:** Thank you to all those who have contributed to the Christmas Collection for Staff at St Thomas', we have raised £900 of our £1500 target. The Parent Council will arrange to buy each member of staff a present (c100 staff). If you'd like to contribute please use link below. You can pay by card, Apple Pay etc, any donation however small will help. You can also leave a message and we will add it to the Christmas Card we will send them. https://pay.collctiv.com/stthomas-of-aquins-staff-christmas-collection-94081

7. **Shoebox appeal:** Mr Wotherspoon, The Caritas group, and The S6 Leadership group are supporting The Sacred Heart with their Shoebox appeal. If families can support, whatever that may be, please consider taking part in this by reading and acting upon the Shoebox appeal attachment. Thank you all so much for the boxes that have already been handed in. They have been placed in front of the school crib in the reception area.

8. **Christmas Jumper day**: Christmas Jumper Day will be taking place on Friday 10th December! (please see the attachment). On this day, pupils can wear their favourite Christmas jumper alongside their school uniform. If you can, we are encouraging pupils and staff to make a donation to our charity collection for Save The Children. In the lead up to Christmas Jumper Day, St Thomas' will also be running a Christmas Jumper Swap & Shop. This is a great way of getting in the festive spirit while keeping costs down and avoiding fast fashion! How it works: Bring in any Christmas jumpers that you have grown out of or tired of. Jumpers must be clean and in good condition. They can be submitted to Miss Whiffen in Room 2.12 anytime from Monday 29th November. During the 6th - 9th December, there will be a jumper swap & shop in the hall at lunch times. If you have already brought in an old jumper, you can swap for a different one for free! Otherwise, you can buy one of our pre-loved jumpers for £2. All money raised will be added to the proceeds that we raise on Christmas Jumper Day.

9. **Pupil Parliament:** The next Pupil Parliament will take place on Monday 6th December.

10. **S2 Parents Curriculum Information Evening**: The S2 curriculum evening which will take place online on Thursday 9th December from 6.00 until 7.00 pm. The purpose of this session is to share information with our parents regarding the curriculum structure and the pathways for progression available at St Thomas' at Broad General Education and Senior Phase level. Information can be found on the school website home page: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/

11. **End of term planning**: The school will close at 12 noon on Friday 17th December and Madame JeanPierre and Ms Mariani will be holding Year House assemblies throughout Friday 17th December to say goodbye to the pupils. School will start again on Thursday 6th January 2022 Good luck to all S4-S6 pupils taking part in the January prelims – the timetable is attached.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's,

Please find the parent briefing for Monday 22nd of November

2. **Health and Safety**: Thank you to all parents and pupils who are supporting the health and safety of the school community. If there are any positive Covid19 cases in the school community, parents will be alerted by text and NHS letters will be posted on the school website under news and events found https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/weekly-bulletin

12. **Staffing**: Madame Jean-Pierre, Mrs Ritchie, and Ms Mariani interviewed for a Pupil Support Officer on Friday 12th of November and I am pleased to report that we have invited 2 candidates to come and work at St Thomas of Aquin's. There are adverts for 2 Pupil Support Assistants and 1 School Support Assistant out on Myjobscotland. Good luck to the candidates being interviewed for the part-time permanent Computing Science position on Monday 22nd of November.

3. **Sustainability at St Thomas of Aquin's:** I have invited staff members who may be interested in leading sustainability to come and speak with me to lead on supporting the Pupil Parliament's Climate Action Group, re-securing the school's Green Flag status, and driving forward sustainable practices in the school. I hope to be back in touch with an update in December.

4. **Pupil Parliament:** The next Pupil Parliament will take place on Monday 6th December.

5. **Shoebox Appeal:** Mr Wotherspoon, the Caritas Group, and the S6 Leadership Group will be supporting The Sacred Heart with their Shoebox appeal. Please consider taking part in this by reading and acting upon the Shoebox appeal attachment found in the News and Events tab. If you and your children are interested in supporting this great event can you bring in items asap. **I hope that St Thomas of Aquin's can support The Sacred Heart with 200 shoeboxes!**

6. **Anti-Bullying Week**: Anti-bullying week finished last Friday with a Kahoot quiz in the hall at breaktime planned by the Equalities Group. I am thankful for Ms Cairns and The Equalities group with all of their work this term. Thank you to all staff and pupils who have supported the week.

7. **Show Racism the Red card workshops**: All pupils at St Thomas of Aquin's will experience SRTRC workshops over the next 2 weeks.

8. **S4 Reports**: Parents and pupils can expect to have the reports by Wednesday 1st December.

9. **S5 and S6 Full reports**: Reporting will start on Monday 22nd November and will be completed by Friday 3rd December. Parents and pupils can expect to have the reports in the last week of term.

10. The **S2 parents information evenings** is being planned by the senior leadership team and this MS Teams remote meeting will take place on Thursday 9th December. I will be presenting an overview of the school's curriculum and the very positive attainment that the school is achieving. Madame JeanPierre and one of our Pupil Support Leaders will be sharing the personalisation and choice unit

pupils experience in PSE and our Skills Development Scotland colleague, Claire Alexander, will present how pupils can be supportive through a blend of positive destination journeys.

11. **Literacy in Advent**: Throughout the season of Advent, St Thomas of Aquin's will pause every Friday morning as a school community to listen to a reflection written by one of our S1 pupils. The pupil will deliver their prayer using the school tannoy system. These reflections will serve to remind us of the four themes of advent – hope, peace, love and joy – which guide us as we prepare for the birth of our Saviour. I would like to thank Laura O'Donnell (Literacy Co-ordinator) for supporting our S1 pupils

12. **S5&6 retreats**: A reminder that there are two retreats scheduled for **Monday, 22 November at St Catharine's Convent**: **Periods 1-3: S5 St Andrew's House pupils and Periods 5-7: S6 St Andrew's House pupils**

Regards
Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
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Twitter: @thomasofaquins

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for the week beginning Monday 15th November

1. **Health and Safety**: Please find attached the Bus vaccination poster for the 15th to 28th November. The next St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety meeting will take place on Thursday 18th November Lesson 3.

2. **Staffing**: Madame Jean-Pierre, Mrs Ritchie, and Ms Mariani interviewed for a Pupil Support Officer on Friday and I will be updating the school community on their decision later on this week. There are adverts for 2 Pupil Support Assistants and 1 School Support Assistant out on myjobscotland.

3. **Feast Day of St Margaret:** On Tuesday 16th November, St Thomas of Aquin's celebrates the Feast Day of St Margaret. Prayers will be held in the Oratory for all of St Margarets pupils during period 1 and 2.

4. **LDS Sports brochure:** Please find attached a pdf of **Disability Sport and Physical Activity Opportunities** which is a partnership document created by Lothian Disability Sport LDS and Scottish Disability Sport SDS and **Active Schools**.

5. **Anti-Bullying Week - 15th until 19th November** : This year's theme will be "One kind Word". All pupils will be taken through a presentation in their classes on Monday 15th November Period 1.

6. **S4 Reports**: S4 full reporting will be completed by Friday 19th November. Parents and pupils can expect to have the reports by Wednesday 1st December.

7. **S2 Parents' Evenings**: A reminder that S2 Parents' Evenings are being held on Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th November. The **S2 parents information evenings** is being planned by the senior leadership team and this MS Teams remote meeting will take place on Thursday 9th December. I will be presenting an overview of the school's curriculum and the very positive attainment that the school is achieving. Madame Jean-Pierre and one of our Pupil Support Leaders will be sharing the personalisation and choice unit pupils experience in PSE and our Skills Development Scotland colleague, Claire Alexander, will present how pupils can be supportive through a blend of positive destination journeys.

8. **School renewal plan:** Please find the November update on the school website: https://www.st-thomasof-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/November-2021-CS-updates-St-Thomas-school-renewalplan-2021-22.pdf

9. **The Quatermile:** I continue to be very impressed with the conduct of our 790 pupils around the Quatermile area at break and lunchtime. I am in contact with some Businesses about minor incidents involving our pupils and I work in partnership with them to ensure any concerns are looked into and pupils spoken with.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

MONDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the HT briefing for the week beginning Monday 8th November:

10. **Health and Safety**: The next St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety meeting will take place on Thursday 18th November Lesson 3.

11. **Attendance**: I would like to congratulate all staff in completing lesson by lesson registration and for colleagues in the Integrated Support Team and the Admin Team in supporting the monitoring of attendance. Congratulations to all pupils for the last 3 weeks of attendance, it is very encouraging:

3/Oct/21 - 9/Oct/21	94.52%	94.10%	93.84%	92.43%	90.01%	93.18%	93.05%
10/Oct/21 - 16/Oct/21	94.08%	92.41%	90.19%	93.58%	90.17%	92.79%	92.20%
24/Oct/21 - 30/Oct/21	**96.04%**	92.81%	93.33%	94.18%	91.79%	94.11%	93.72%

12. **1:1 iPad update**: This week Krissie Davies will be meeting with The Leadership Team on Thursday 11th November. The St Thomas' staff Collegiate Activity Time on the 9th December will have an ICT focus.

St Thomas of Aquin's ICT vision is for all pupils and staff to be

- Connected
- Engaged ▶ Creative

in the use of ICT to ensure an equitable experience

13. **Staffing**: A permanent part-time Computing Teacher advert for St Thomas' has gone live and will close on the 9th November.

14. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday 11th November. Would you like to learn more and contribute to St Thomas of Aquins? Why not join the Parent Council? We are a very friendly and open bunch of parents and we have virtual meetings with Mr Santini and other school staff which anyone can join. We will be discussing topics such as the school's attendance and equality policy, CO2 monitoring, community involvement and P7 Transition. Please email us for the Teams Link and we will also send you the agenda: stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com

If you can't attend this meeting why not come to our next meetings:

- Tuesday 25 January 2022 - 1830-20:30
- Thursday 24 March 2022 - 18:30-2030
- Thursday 26 May 2022 - 1830-2030

Parent Council Fundraising: Although it is not possible for us to organise our usual fundraising activities just now, we have other easy ways you can help raise money for the school. **The 50:50 club** is a monthly lottery in which 50% of the income goes to the winners in cash prizes and the remainder goes to supporting school activities and equipment. If you sign up to **Easyfundraising**, you can help raise funds for our school whenever you shop online – with no catches or hidden charges and at no extra cost to you. Over the past year, over £800 was raised for school activities and equipment through these schemes. For more details on how to get involved, please follow this link: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/parent-council/fundraising-forthe-school/

15. **P7/S1 transition event**: Please find attached the P7/S1 transition letter that has been sent out to St Thomas' associated primaries and to primary schools that sent pupils to St Thomas' last session. The P7/S1 information is on the school website, please share with any parent interested in joining our school community - https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/

16. **S4-S6 uniform focus**: During November, Ms Mariani will be meeting with senior pupils who are not wearing full school uniform.

17. **S4 Reports**: S4 full reporting will start on Monday 8th November and will be completed by Friday 19th November.

18. **S2 Parents' Evenings**: A reminder that S2 Parents' Evenings are being held on Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th November.

19. **The Sacred Heart**: It was a pleasure meeting the new Parish Priest at The Sacred Heart last week, Fr Adrian Porter. Fr Porter and I discussed how St Thomas of Aquin's and The Sacred Heart can continue to work in partnership to enhance the Catholic community in central Edinburgh. I have already spoken with Mr Wotherspoon and Mrs Ritchie regarding supporting The Sacred Heart Christmas 2021 shoebox

appeal and I hope The S6 Caritas Team can lead on this initiative. I have also spoken with Ms Patrick and Mr Kennedy regarding the fund The Sacred Heart is applying for to support for vocal training for St Thomas of Aquin's pupils and for the use of Church organ for pupils with Grade 7+ Piano. Finally, Ms Mariani will make contact with The Sacred Heart regarding supporting S6 pupils interested in experiencing Oxbridge mock interviews.

20. **Face masks**: It remains so important that all pupils and staff wear face masks to support the health of the school community. On a weekly basis St Thomas of Aquin's is handing out over 800 non-reusable masks at a cost of over £500. Can I ask families to support an environmentally sustainable approach for pupils bringing and wearing face masks to the school.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2021

Good Morning to all parents on this Holy Day of Obligation, Monday the 1st November – All Saints Day

21. **Health and Safety**:
    With the winter months approaching, pupils will be allowed to keep their jackets on in classrooms whilst St Thomas' continues to follow guidance of keeping a window and classrooms doors open to support the flow of air in and around the school building.

    Can I ask all parents to support pupils wearing full school uniform to school. Pupils will be allowed wear outside jackets in classrooms due to windows and doors being open:

    - **Black V-neck jumper**
    - **White shirt**
    - **School Tie**
    - **Black skirt and trousers (not leggings on their own or black jeans)**
    - **Black shoes**

The next St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety meeting will take place on Thursday 4th November Lesson 3.

22. **School renewal planning update**: Please find attached the school renewal plan update. This year the school renewal plan updates will be linked to the senior leadership team colleague leading on their specific Quality Indicator area (Quality Indicators are benchmarks used by school inspectors to analysis and evaluate school improvement: https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf).
    I have completed my first renewal update and by the end of December Ms Mariani will be completed her QI area.

23. **1:1 iPad update**: St Thomas of Aquin's has been assigned a CGI colleague to support with the iPad rollout. Krissie Davies will be visiting the school on November 4th to meet with myself, Ms Stalker, Ms Mariani, and Mrs Ritchie and I will be inviting Krissie Davies to a Leadership meeting in November to meet with Curricular and Pastoral Leaders. I will continue to update the school community on the iPad rollout once the two CEC pilot schools have completed their rollout in mid-November.

24. **Staffing**: St Thomas of Aquin's welcomes Nicola Brisley as our Closing the Gap Teacher who started at St Thomas of Aquin's last week. The Closing the Gap Teacher is a specific Covid19 recovery fund that will continue for one more session in 2022-23, albeit at a reduced amount. Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs Ritchie interviewed for the 23 month Pupil Equity Fund post "Pupil Support Officer" prior to the October break. Unfortunately we have had to readvertised for this post. A permanent part-time Computing Teacher advert for St Thomas' has gone live and will close on the 9th November.

25. **Chaplaincy Newsletter and November Mass**: Please find attached the Chaplaincy newsletter and a reminder of the school lunchtime Mass on Wednesday 3rd November. Thanks to Mr Wotherspoon and Fr Burke for their continued leadership.

26. **Parent Council meeting**: The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday 11th November. The parent Council will be making contact with parents via email.

27. **S3 Parents Evenings:** A reminder that the dates for the S3 parents evenings being held this week are Wednesday 3rd and 4th November.

28. **S1-S3 Tracking Reports**: S1-S3 pupils received their tracking reports on Friday 29th October and pupils who were absent on Friday can pick up their Tracking Reports from the school reception this week.

29. **Compliant:** I received a complaint by a member of the public regarding alleged inappropriate behaviour by pupils of St Thomas of Aquin's on a 27 Bus travelling from the school to Hunters Tryst

last week after school. Can I ask parents of pupils who do use this Bus to support the best of behaviour at all times.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

Monday, 11 October 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the HT briefing email for Monday 11th October.

30. **Health and Safety**: Mrs Ritchie, St Thomas of Aquin's Business Manager, has been working with staff to monitor the C02 levels in all classrooms prior to the October break. I would like to extend my thanks to her and at the next Parent Council meeting in November the school will be able to updates parents on the progress. The next Health and Safety meeting is on the Thursday 14th October Lesson 3. Please find attached the Vaccination Bus information for this week.

31. **S4-S6 Tracking reports and the start of S1-S3 Tracking**:
S4-S6 Tracking reports have been handed out to pupils on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th October. S1-S3 Tracking reports will be completed on Friday 15th October. Reports will be quality assured and handed to S1-S3 pupils after the October break

32. **Parents Evenings**: All parents' evenings this year will continue to be a remote experience and St Thomas' will continue to use phonecall to parents. Please find below the plan for the 2021-22 Parents Evenings:

2021-22 Parents Evenings	**Evening 1:**	**Evening 2:**
S3: Wed 3rd & Thurs 4th Nov	English . (8) Science . (8)	Maths (7) Social Subject (7)
	Modern languages (4) Performing Arts (4) Religious Education (2) Support for Learning (3)	Expressive Arts (6) Physical Education (4) Computing Science (3) Pupil Support Leaders (3)

S2: Mon 15th & Tue16th Nov	English . (7) Science . (8) Modern languages (4) Performing Arts (4) Religious Education (2) Support for Learning (3)	Maths (7) Social Subject (7) Expressive Arts (6) Physical Education (4) Computing Science (3) Pupil Support Leaders (3)
S5/6: Wed 9th & Thurs 10th Feb	English . (7) Science . (8) Modern languages (4) Performing Arts (4) Religious Education (2) Support for Learning (3)	Maths (7) Social Subject (7) Expressive Arts (6) Physical Education (4) Computing Science (3) Pupil Support Leaders (3)
S4: Mon 28th & Tues 1st March	English . (7) Science . (8) Modern languages (4) Performing Arts (4) Religious Education (2) Support for Learning (3)	Maths (7) Social Subject (7) Expressive Arts (6) Physical Education (4) Computing Science (3) Pupil Support Leaders (3)
S1: Tues 29th & Wed 30th March	English . (7) Science . (8) Modern languages (4) Performing Arts (4) Religious Education (2) Support for Learning (3)	Maths (7) Social Subject (7) Expressive Arts (6) Physical Education (4) Computing Science (3) Pupil Support Leaders (3)

33. **Rights Respecting School (RRS)**: Ms McGowan is leading on RSS this session and will be asking pupils to complete a survey after the October break. The school is hoping for a 70% plus return and will ask parents to support their children in completing the survey.

34. **House Captain**s: Congratulations to the following S6 pupils who will be representing their House for session 2021-22:

St Margaret's: Harvey Neilson & Rebecca Thomson
St Andrew's: Francesca Keane & Christian Pacitti
St Patrick's: Sarah Al Dubai & Grace Savage

35. **2021-22 Pupil Parliament**: The first Pupil Parliament took place on Wednesday 6th October and I would like to thank Mr Rafferty, Mr Murray, and Mrs Ross for organising this event . The next Pupil Parliament will be on Monday 6th December.

36. **S1-S3 CEC Hockey:** Please find attached flyer for the 2021/2022 City of Edinburgh Schools Sports Academy Hockey programme intake. Applications should be returned by e-mail to SportsAcademy@edinburgh.gov.uk by **Friday 22 October 2021.**

37. **Any spare instruments?** Some families may have an unused musical instrument in the home that they might consider donating to the school. The Performing Arts Faculty are currently testing our S1 and S2 cohort for placement on the instrumental timetable and we don't have a surplus of instruments,

specifically orchestral instruments. Any donations of playable orchestral instruments and guitars would be greatly appreciated.

38. **S4 pupil Katie Accarino** has been invited to take part in the semi-finals of West End Calling, a national competition for developing music theatre singers. Katie has chosen to sing "When He Sees Me", from the musical Waitress. Katie will travel to Manchester for the semi-final in the Hope Mill Theatre, on the 7th November - we wish her the best of luck.

39. **October break**: As St Thomas of Aquin's completes its first term I would like to thank all staff and pupils for such a calm, friendly, and productive working environment in the school during the last 9 weeks. Pupils will return to school on Tuesday 26th October, in full school uniform, ready for the next 8 weeks of learning.

    A reminder that Friday 15th October is a normal school day ending at 1.10 and all pupils are to be full school uniform.

Regards

Christopher Santini

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MONDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School.

I hope you and your families enjoyed a relaxing October holiday and your children, our pupils, are looking forward to he next 8 weeks of term. Please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 25th of October.

40. **Health and Safety**: During the October break The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills confirmed that existing Covid-19 mitigations in schools are to remain in place. This means that pupils and staff are to continue wearing face masks in classrooms and around the school building, to use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the school building and entering and existing classrooms, and to support the cleaning of desks at the beginning and end of lessons. The physical distancing between adults and, adults and pupils should also remain in place.

    Thanks to Mrs Ritchie and all colleagues for completing the monitoring of C02 levels in classrooms prior to the October break. Mrs Ritchie will update the Parent Council with the information at the next Parent Council meeting on Thursday 11th of November.

    With the winter months approaching, pupils will be allowed to keep their jackets on in classrooms whilst St Thomas' continues to follow guidance of keeping a window and the classrooms door open to support the flow of air in and around the school building. Can I ask all parents to support their children wearing the full school uniform of:

    - **Black V-neck jumper**
    - **White shirt**
    - **School Tie**
    - **Black skirt and trousers (not leggings on their own or black jeans)**
    - **Black shoes**

    I would also like to emphasize to parents that pupils should not be wearing non-school hoodie jumpers in the school classrooms.

41. **Staffing**: I will be updating staff and parents on the interviews for the Closing the Gap Teacher and Pupil Support Officer positions during the next week.

42. **S1-S3 Tracking**: S1-S3 Tracking reports have been completed and will be quality assured this week. Tracking reports will be handed to out to pupils on Friday 29th of October.

43. **S3 Parents Evenings:** A reminder to S3 parents that the dates for the parents evenings are **Wednesday 3rd and 4th November**.

44. **University of Edinburgh**: I am very pleased to announce St Thomas of Aquin's will be working with Edinburgh University in a research project on pupils missing out on education due to school exclusion. I will keep the community updated on our progress.

45. **S4-S6 Progress Tests and January 2022 Prelims:** St Thomas' Senior Leadership Team and Leadership Team continue to plan and support pupils with ongoing formative progress tests. S4-S6 parents will have received a timetable for the progress tests throughout the year. During November, the school will plan for prelims in January 2022 and I wish to assure parents and pupils that assessment arrangements will be in place not only for the Prelims but also for the ongoing progress tests. I would like to thanks
Mrs Bendall and the Support for Learning Team for ensuring that the appropriate information and resources are in place for pupils.

46. **Flu inoculations:** A reminder to staff and pupils that the planned Flu inoculations will be administered on **Thursday 28th October**. Inoculations will only be given to staff and pupils who have consented for this to happen.

47. **Friday 29th of October:** The Equalities staff and pupil group will be helping the community of St Thomas of Aquin's support Show Racism the Red Card on Friday 29th of October and it would be great if all staff and pupils wear something **red** with their **full school uniform** on Friday. Voluntary contributions are welcome.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY, 4 October 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas',

Please find the parental briefing for Monday 4th October:

48. **Health and Safety**: Please find the latest vaccination Bus poster for this week.

49. **Staffing:** Congratulations to Mr C Ferguson who is the successful candidate for the Temporary part-time Physical Education Teacher post.

50. Mr K Begley, permanent Chemistry Teacher, will be starting at St Thomas of Aquin's on Monday 4th October.

    Madame Jean-Pierre and Mrs Ritchie will be interviewing for the temporary Pupil Support Officer position on Monday 4th October.

51. **School Uniform**: I would like to thank parents in supporting pupils wearing full school uniform in school. I am seeing a minority of S4-S6 pupils wearing non-uniform tops in school and I would like all of us to make a concerted effort to ensure that non-uniform hoodies and jumpers are not worn to school. The uniform that I should be seeing in classrooms is as follows:

    Black shoes, black trousers/skirt, white shirt and St Thomas' tie, black jumper/cardigan.

52. **2021-22 Pupil Parliament**: The first Pupil Parliament of the year will take place on Wednesday 6th October in the main hall during lesson 5. This is a new format which is being led by The Pupil Support Leaders of St Thomas and supported by Mrs Ross (Maths). The Pupil Parliament is open to any pupil wishing to attend and the agendas and resulting action points will be led by the pupil voice. There will be 5 Pupil Parliament meetings throughout the year, meeting every 2nd month.

53. **St Thomas After School Clubs:** Please find attached the 2021-22 St Thomas of Aquin's after school sports club activities document. The after school sports clubs will start after the October break. There will be no charge to pupils wishing to attend any of these clubs and I would like to thank all of the staff and senior pupils for volunteering.

    The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure that Lunchtime and After school clubs and Active schools is a sitting agenda item on the SLT agenda and we hope to co-plan the vision and implementation of Lunchtime and After school clubs at St Thomas throughout this session with staff, pupils, and The Parent Council. I will ask the chair of The Parent Council to have this as a sitting agenda item on The Parent Council meetings.

54. **Stobart Report Summary**: Please find a summary of the Stobart report, a paper that analyses Scottish Upper Secondary Assessment with 9 other countries.

55. **Royal Zoological Society**: 4 of our Advanced Higher Biology pupils, Oscar Alapiki, Alex Lopez, Kalina Gancheva, Ria Sherry, have been selected by the Royal Zoological Society to work with Animal conservation scientists. This is a very competitive programme that is open to all of Scottish secondary school pupils. For St Thomas of Aquin's to have 4 pupils selected is not only a credit to the pupils and their families but also to the fantastic Science Faculty at St Thomas of Aquin's.

56. **Thank you**: I was contacted by a member of the public who received help from two of our pupils last week. The member of the public was walking their dog who managed to escape from his leash and harness and run down a street near to St Thomas. Two St Thomas of Aquin's pupils saw the member of the public panicking and they supported by retrieving the dog. The member of the public would like to thank the pupils.

Regards

Christopher Santini

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27 September 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School,

Please find the HT briefing for Monday 27th September – our 7th week back this term

57. **Health and Safety**: CEC warn and inform letters will now be placed on the school website with an indication of the year groups and a text will be sent out to parents asking them to go to the website.
Co2 monitors: Every 2 weeks the 3 C02 monitors will be placed around the school. The Health and Safety Team will start to build up a picture of analysis and feedback to staff and parents after the October break.

The COVID-19 vaccination bus will be at the following locations next week:

- Edinburgh College (Milton road) on Monday 27th Sept (11am-7pm)

- Edinburgh College (Granton) on Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th Sept (11am-7pm)

- There is also the vaccinations for 12-15 year olds this weekend (Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th Sept) at Fort Kinnaird, New Craighall.

58. **School App**: The School App will be updated with the 2021-22 Reporting calendar. I have asked the school Admin team to update the School App information. Please contact the school office for the QR code.

59. **2021-22 St Thomas of Aquin's S4-S6 progress test timeline and self-evaluation calendar**: Please find both documents attached.

60. **S4-S6 Tracking reports 1**: The first Tracking Report for S4-S6 pupils will start on Tuesday 21st September and finish on Friday 1st October. Tracking reports will then be quality assured and then sent to parents and pupils prior to the October break.

61. **S6 Leadership roles**:
    Following interviews last week the successful candidates for the S6 leadership positions are:

    Head Girl - Shona Riach
    Depute Head Girl - Francesca Lee
    Head Boy - Max Cronin
    Depute Head Boy - Oliver Magreth Badrena

    I will be meeting with the group on the 6th October at 9.30am to redraft their remits and plan activities that could be successful this session.

62. **Platinum Jubilee**: Please find attached a letter regarding the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Regards

Christopher Santini

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21 September 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parental briefing for the week beginning Monday 20th September:

63. **Health and Safety**: Please find attached the updated St Thomas of Aquin's Covid-19 changes to school culture and a letter from Professor Jason Leitch which has already been sent to parents.

64. **CO2 monitors**: Every 2 weeks the 3 C02 monitors will be placed around the school. The Health and Safety Team will start to build up a picture of analysis and feedback to staff and parents after the October break.

65. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mrs C Berry who was the successful candidate for the permanent part-time Physical Education post. St Thomas of Aquin's are advertising for a temporary full time Pupil Support Officer post who will be responsible for managing the Learning Nurture Hub, communicate with pupils who are self-isolating regarding home study, and support the implementation of a new Active Schools after school club system. St Thomas is also advertising for a Closing the Gap Teacher to work alongside Ms Mariani and the Pupil Support Officer.

66. **Whole school and Faculty Attainment document**: Please find the annual whole school and Faculty attainment results document which will be placed on the school website.

67. **S4-S6 Tracking Reports 1**: The first Tracking Report for S4-S6 pupils will start on Tuesday 21st September and finish on Friday 1st October. Tracking Reports will then be quality assured and then sent to parents and pupils prior to the October break.

68. **S4-S6 Progress test calendar:** As of part of the 2021-24 school improvement plan, St Thomas' wishes to share with S4-S6 pupils and parents a timeline of progress tests. Ms Mariani hopes to collate and share the progress test calendar for S4-S6 pupils by the end of this week.

69. **Accessible Toilet**: St Thomas of Aquin's has now replaced the Disabled toilets signs for a more inclusive accessible toilet sign.

70. **S6 Leadership Roles**: The Pupil Support Team and myself interviewed candidates for the Head Girl and Head Boy positions on Thursday and Friday of last week. I was very impressed with all candidates and I feel truly blessed to be Head Teacher of St Thomas of Aquin's with such talent existing in the S6 year group.

71. **S1 pupils allowed out of school at break and lunchtime**: As of Tuesday 21st September, S1 pupils will be allowed out of the school building at break & lunchtime. I have been so impressed with our new S1 year group & I am expecting the highest standards of behaviour from them if they choose to go out during social times.

72. **Friday 24th September Non-Uniform Day for Macmillan Cancer Trust**: Pupils and staff can wear non-uniform (Please can I ask parents to support their children in wearing appropriate clothing to school) clothing to school on Friday 24th September in aid of Macmillan Cancer Trust. Pupils and staff can donate money at the start of lesson 1 and Ms Mariani will organise S6 pupils to collect the money at the end of lesson 1.

73. **Good Morning Britain**: On Monday 20th September 7 pupils were interviewed live on GM TV. I would like to extend my thanks to ITV and a special mention to the S3 and S4 pupils who were so very impressive in their interview: https://twitter.com/GMB/status/1439820868713132033

S3: Joanna Boulis, Joe O'Brien, Adrianna Czarnecka.
S4: Neev Patel, Beth Reed Maddy, Juliet Marshall, Aadi Chouhan.

Regards

Christopher Santini

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Monday, 13th September 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas

Please find the parental briefing for Monday 13th September

74. **Health and Safety**: Please find attached a letter to parents from Lorna French. I will be updating the St Thomas COVID 19 change to culture document this week with the amendments to pupil Test and

Protect, the use of the Physical Education changing rooms, and the use of C02 monitors in rooms every 2 weeks. I hope to be able to send this to all parents next Tuesday (Monday 20th September is a school holiday). I have asked staff to continue supporting pupils who are self- isolating by placing work on MS Teams.

75. **Staffing**: The part-time permanent Physical Education interview will take place on Monday 13th September. I will also be advertising a for a full-time temporary Pupil Support Officer and a 4 day temporary Closing the Gap Teacher post.

76. **Key dates for parents:** Please find the 2021-22 key tracking, reporting, and parent evenings dates for session 2021-22. Until further notice, Parents Evenings will be conducted via telephone.

77. **Active Schools:** I am containing to liaise with Active Schools regarding our After School Clubs. I would like to thank our Active School Co-ordinator in planning a draft voluntary/coach calendar which I hope can be implemented in October.

78. **HT Vision, Values, Expectations, and Action Assemblies**: Last week, I had the pleasure of meeting all S1-3 pupils and discussing how important it is for every pupil to feel safe and supported at St Thomas of Aquin's. Please do speak with your child about the assembly. I will be meeting with all S4-6 pupils this week. These Assemblies will support the work of The Equalities group at St Thomas to ensure that any form of hate language or action is being identified and dealt with.

79. **S4-S6 Progress Test Calendar:** As of part of the 2021-24 school improvement plan, St Thomas' wishes to share with S4-S6 pupils and parents a timeline of progress tests. By the end of next week, after remotely meeting with all staff on Wednesday, Ms Mariani will hopefully have a draft progress test calendar for S4-S6 pupils for this session and will email this out to pupils and parents.

80. **The Equality and Human Rights Committee of the Scottish Youth Parliament**: is undertaking a survey about the experience of RE and religious discrimination within Scottish schools. "The Scottish Youth Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee wants to hear your views on religious discrimination in Scotland and investigate how religious education can be improved to promote tolerance and equality." While it is a survey of the Youth Parliament, people of any age can complete it. It is anonymous and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The link for the survey is: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSccUVVv7CoUYj4I7e0gKaBcSRZtkrawn_UHUtWb5wKECQ_eJA/viewform

81. **Parent Council Meeting:** The first Parent Council meeting will take place on **Tuesday 28th of September at 6.30pm** (This will be a remote meeting). Apologies for the typo mistake last week.

Wishing you and your children a very engaging and successful week.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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Monday, 6th September 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parental briefing for Monday 6th September.

82. **Staffing**: I can update the school community on the permanent Chemistry position and congratulate Mr K Begley will hopefully be starting at St Thomas at the end of September. Congratulations to Mr K Gilhooley is now a permanent Pupil Support Assistant at St Thomas.

Please find the 2021-22 Senior Leadership Team remits attached.

83. 2020-21 Awards: The Leadership Team discussed the S2 to S6 attainment and achievement Awards and we will look to complete last session's awards in the usual format and then start a school community conversation about how the school supports Awards for next session.

84. Parent Council meeting and subgroup: Ms Mariani, Madame Jean-Pierre and myself are inviting any parent to join us in 2 parent sub groups. If you are interested in joining these groups, which I believe will meet once a term, then please email me. You do not need to be a member of the Parent Council to join.

- Learning, Attainment, and Outcomes group
- Health, Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion group

The first Parent Council meeting will take place on **Thursday 28th September at 6.30pm** (This will be a remote meeting).

85. HT assemblies: Over the next 2 weeks I will be holding assemblies for all year groups to support pupils understanding of the school's vision of being a safe and supportive community.
Week beginning Monday 6th of September will be S1-S3 – I will call groups to the main hall using the tannoy

S1 HT assemblies will take place on Tuesday 7th September in House groups
2.00 for St Andrews
2.40 for St Margarets
3.00 for St Patricks

S2 HT assemblies will take place on Thursday 9th September in House groups
9.00 for St Andrews
9.20 for St Margarets
9.40 for St Patricks

S3 HT assemblies will take place on Friday 10th September in House groups
9.00 for St Andrews
9.20 for St Margarets
9.40 for St Patricks

86. Chaplaincy newsletter – Please find attached the 1st Chaplaincy newsletter of the year. Thank you to Mr Wotherspoon and Fr Samuel**.**

Regards

Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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Monday, 30 August 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's, please find the parental briefing email for Monday 30th August.

1. **Health and Safety**: Please find attached a Flu vaccination letter (V9 2021) which will support pupils and staff receiving a flu jab in school. I have also attached a Covid-19 vaccination letter for 16 and 17 year old pupils.

2. **Staffing**: I will be updating the school community on the permanent Chemistry position later on this week.

3. **Place2be**: Place2Talk is a space for all students to think about any concerns they might have and express themselves through talking and/or creative work. Slots are bookable in advance and students can attend on their own or with their peers. Appointments can be booked by emailing Alexia using a school email account. If you would like to find out more, or would prefer that your child does not use this service, please contact Alexia Gaitanou on 0131 2298734 or alexia.gaitanou@place2be.org.uk who is very happy to answer any questions.'

4. **2020-21 Awards**: I have asked all Faculties to complete the 2020-21 S2 to S6 attainment and achievement Awards by Friday 10th September.

5. **Autumn Term Flyer**: Please find attached the CEC Adult classes.

6. **2021-22:** A draft school reporting calendar will be sent out to all staff to vote on this week and I will hopefully be able to send out to parents confirmed tracking, full report, and parent evenings dates very soon.

7. **St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council:** Would you like to learn more and contribute to St Thomas of Aquins? Why not join the Parent Council? We are a very friendly and open bunch of parents and we have virtual meetings with Mr Santini and other school staff which anyone can join. We meet 5 times a year at formal meetings. In addition we have regular sub group working meetings to discuss with the leadership of the school the way forward on issues such as health and wellbeing, curriculum development, attainment and learning as well as an active and successful fundraising and events group. If you'd like to get involved in the parent council including our fundraising group please contact us on stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com. We also have some information on the school website which is being updated at the moment. Coming up soon, we will be running a session for new parents to the school to virtually meet and learn from other parents.

Although it is not possible for us to organise our usual fundraising activities just now, we have other easy ways you can help raise money for the school.

- **The 50:50 club** is a monthly lottery in which 50% of the income goes to the winners in cash prizes and the remainder goes to supporting school activities and equipment.

- If you sign up to **Easyfundraising**, you can help raise funds for our school whenever you shop online – with no catches or hidden charges and at no extra cost to you.

  Over the past year, over £800 was raised for school activities and equipment through these schemes. For more details on how to get involved, please follow this link: https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/parent-council/fundraising-for-the-school/

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

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Monday, 23 August 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquins,

I would like to thank St Thomas' pupils and parents for a very good start to the term for almost all pupils. Ms Mariani and Mme Jean-Pierre will be completing their House Assemblies focusing on standards and uniform and I am hoping to see every pupil in full school uniform as of this week.

8. **Health and Safety**: The weekly St Thomas Health and Safety Team met last Thursday and updated the risk assessments for St Thomas. I can share these with parents if so desired.

9. **Staffing**: St Thomas will be saying goodbye to Ms Callion on Friday 27th August. I do wish her the very best in her new job and I personally thank her for the excellent academic and pastoral support of all the pupils she has taught. Mr Green, Ms Mariani, and I have interviewed 10 longleet Chemistry candidates with potential short leet interviews taking place on Wednesday afternoon.

10. **St Thomas of Aquin's 2020-21 National Qualification attainment data**: Please find details of St Thomas' National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher attainment data for session 2020-21. Congratulations to all the pupils for their achievements. The chart below provides the percentage of pupils achieving National Qualifications in S4, S5, and S6. The percentages of all year groups and levels are always based on the number of pupils who sit their first National Qualifications in S4.

2020-21 School results	**St T of A**	**St T of A**	**St T of A**	**St T of A**	**City of Edinburgh Average**
St Thomas' pupils at the end of S4	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2021**
Pupils gaining 5+ National 3 passes	87% (No of S4 pupils = 128)	93 % (no of S4 pupils = 137)	94% (no of S4 pupils = 130)	**96% (no of S4 pupils = 134)**	83%
Pupils gaining 5+ National 4 passes	83% (No of S4 pupils = 128)	86% (no of S4 pupils = 137)	87% (no of S4 pupils = 130)	**90% (no of S4 pupils = 134)**	76%
Pupils gaining 5+ National 5 passes	58% (No of S4 pupils = 128)	63% (no of S4 pupils = 137)	65% (no of S4 pupils = 130)	**60% (no of S4 pupils = 134)**	49%
St Thomas' pupils at the end of S5					
Pupils gaining 5 Higher passes	37% (No of S4 pupils = 134)	32% (No of pupils in S4 = 128)	37% (No of pupils in S4 = 137)	**41% (no of pupils in S4 = 130)**	25%
St Thomas' pupils by the end of S6					
Pupils gaining 5 Higher passes	37% (No of S4 pupils = 129)	46% (No of S4 pupils = 134	50% (No of pupils on S4 = 128	**57% (No of S4 pupils in S4 = 137)**	42%
Pupils gaining 1	37%	43%	48%	**44%**	25%
Advanced Higher pass	(No of S4 pupils = 129	(No of S4 pupils = 134	(No pupils in S4 = 128)	**(No of S4 pupils in S4 = 137)**	

11. **School Uniform**: I have asked all staff to support the high standards of St Thomas uniform by supporting pupils in taking off outside jackets, hooded tops, or "labelled" non St Thomas black jumpers in class.

12. **Assessment of National Qualifications in 2021-22**: The SQA has informed schools, following confirmation from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in parliament, that exams will be held for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in 2022. SQA exams will take place from **26 April to 1 June 2022** with results day on **9 August 2022**. While detailed planning for delivering exams is now underway, it is also important that SQA, along with the whole education system, plans for any further disruption that may happen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are continuing to discuss with the National Qualifications Group* any additional measures that will help the education system respond to further significant disruption to learning or changes to public health conditions.

Modifications to the assessment requirements for each National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course were announced in June (a brief overview of these can be found by visiting sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects, selecting a subject and then selecting the 'Course information 2021-22' tab). The modifications will help reduce the volume of assessment and ease teacher, lecturer and learner workload, while maintaining the credibility of these qualifications. This will also allow for any lost learning caused by Covid-19 and will support learners as they progress to the next stage of their qualifications. For most National 5 to Advanced Higher courses, these are the same modifications that were put in place for 2020-21.

13. **2020-21 Awards**: I have asked Faculties to start the identification of S2 to S6 attainment and achievement Awards. Although there will not be a junior or senior award ceremony this year the school will ensure that pupils are recognised for their achievements.

14. **Active Schools**: Please find an update on CEC clubs programme throughout Edinburgh and an update on the changes that Active Schools are implementing as to how clubs will run and be managed. I will ask the Parent Council to place Active Schools on the agenda of the 1st meeting. There is a significant change to Active Schools which will be carful consideration and planning.

15. **Empowered Learning 1:1** Please find the links to CEC Empowered Learning clips and slides. I will continue to share information with school community regarding when and how iPads will be shared in St Thomas: Empowered Digital Learning - YouTube; Empowered Learning Launch Slides.22.06.21 – PowerPoint.

16. **Bus travel update**: Please find attached a PDF update on free Bus travel for pupils.

17. **Diana Award**: Congratulations to former Head Boy Christian Monaco and thanks to Ms Patrick in supporting his Diana Award success.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

WEDNESDAY, 4 AUGUST 2021

Good Afternoon to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

I hope that you and your families are enjoying the summer holidays.

Yesterday, Tuesday, 3 August 2021, The First Minister of Scotland updated the country on the Covid-19 guidance which will commence on Monday, 9 August.

Please find a summary of the Scottish Government's guidance for schools attached. You will read that local authorities and schools should continue to apply the mitigations in place at the end of last term which would mean that staggered starts, the use of one-way systems, no year group assemblies, the use of face masks and hand sanitising, and the updating of risk assessments would remain in place for a period of up to 6 weeks.

There will be further advice on an up-dated policy for self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for under 18 close contacts which will result in the ability to remove contact groupings in school.

I will be attending a remote HT meeting on Wednesday, 11 August which will support me and other CEC HTs in updating parents on what the first week of school will look and feel like for your children.

I will email you on the afternoon of Wednesday, 11 August with further details. I will place the attached Covid19 updated guidance on the school website by tomorrow morning.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk
Twitter: @thomasofaquins

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

Self-Discipline **T**eamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

WEEK BEGINNING, 31 MAY 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas', please find the HT briefing for Monday 31st May

1. **S1-S3 Tracking**: The S1/ S2 / S3 tracking period has had to be extended due to the school server not being able to save reports. I would like to apologise for this and once we can save the Tracking Reports we will send to families as soon as possible. I have contacted CGI to ensure the school's server is fixed.

2. **Lateral Flow Testing**: I would like to re-emphasise the importance for as many pupils as possible to take part in the voluntary flow testing programme.

   Pupils and staff can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

   If any person develops Covid-19 Symptoms please do not attend the school building and arrange for a Covid-19 test:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

3. **Parent Council meeting & AGM**: The last Parent Council meeting & AGM of session 2021-22 has been moved to Tuesday 15th June 6.30-8.30.

4. **School renewal plan 2021-24**: Please do email me with your thoughts on the 2021-24 school renewal plan. The senior leadership team will be meeting on Wednesday 9th June to work on drafting specific tasks focussed on the 3 areas identified in the renewal plan priorities document attached.

5. **Final assessment support:** On the day that a pupil has a scheduled assessment, St Thomas' wishes to support their wellbeing by granting permission to attend school for the assessment only. S4-S6 pupils will continue to attend all classes on days that they do not have scheduled assessments and where possible pupils will be given the opportunity to study for their upcoming assessments. Teachers will support with subject revision where required. Once S6 pupils have completed all of their assessments they do not need to return to timetabled classes.

6. **S6 Leavers:** The Pupil Support Team and Ms Mariani are planning a morning event in the school playground from 9.00-10.00am on Thursday 17th June where S6 pupils can sign shirts, listens to farewell speeches from the Headgirl and Headboy and take photographs. S6 pupils will not be allowed around the school building as S1-S5 learning and teaching is continuing however staff who are not teaching can come to the playground to sign shirts.

7. **1:1 ICT plan**: To support all staff and all pupils using 1:1 ICT in session 2021-22, ICT engineers will be visiting St Thomas on **Friday 28th and Monday 31st May** to evaluate the school's wi-fi. I will continue to share information regarding the 1:1 roll-out when I receive it from CEC.

8. **Uniform:** I will meet with S2 pupils in on Friday Lesson 1 to discuss the wearing of full school uniform to school. I will visit S1 classes over the next 2 weeks.

   A reminder that pupils should be wearing:

   Black shoes
   trousers/skirt
   white shirt and school tie
   black V-neck jumper
   optional school blazer.

   Details can be found on the school website of our expectations: https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OUR-SCHOOL-UNIFORM-2015-2016.pdf

9. **Compliant:** I received a complaint last week by a member of the public regarding St Thomas pupils at the Bus stop at the top of Chalmers street. The member of the public was supporting their elderly parent onto a Bus and it is with regret that St Thomas' pupils were not as supportive in letting the elderly citizen on first. Can I ask St Thomas' parents whose children use the Edinburgh Bus service to support the highest standards of behaviour when attending and leaving St Thomas of Aquin's building.

10. **Session date change Christmas holidays 2021:** At its March meeting, the Education, Children and Families Committee agreed to change the scheduled Christmas holiday dates from **Friday 24 December 2021 - Monday 10 January 2022** to **Monday 20 December 2021 - Tuesday 4 January 2022.**

The change was based on a similar amendment to the previous year's holiday dates. The reasons for the change are set out in this committee report:https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s31995/7.10%20School%20Session%20Dates%20Amendment%202021-22.pdf. The report did not include consideration of the in-service day after the holidays. This will be Wednesday 5 January 2022. To ensure that pupils are in school for the required 190 days, the summer term will be amended to finish on **Friday 1 July 2022** instead of **Thursday 30 June**. The agreed changes are now on the Council website, along with dates for dates for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Regards

Christopher Santini
Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

WEEK BEGINNING, 17 MAY 2021

Good Morning to the Parents of St Thomas

Please find the HT briefing for Monday, 17th May

11. **Health and Safety**: The weekly Health and Safety meeting will take place on Monday 17th May Lesson 5.

    I would like to continue emphasise how important it is for as many pupils as possible to pick up Lateral Flow Test kits from Ms Hunter's office is at the end of the senior leadership team corridor. Lateral Flow Testing surveys to pupils and parents later on this week.

12. **Week beginning Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th May**: A reminder to parents that Monday 24th is a holiday and Tuesday 25th is a moderation and assessment day for staff. All pupils will return to school on Wednesday 26th May.

13. **S1 Parents Evening**: The S1 Parents Evening will be held this week - Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th May 5-7pm via telephone.

14. **Parent Council meeting & AGM**: The last Parent Council meeting & AGM of session 2021-22 has been moved to Tuesday 15th June 6.30-8.30.

15. **Final assessment support:** On the day that a pupil has a scheduled assessment, St Thomas' wishes to support their wellbeing by granting permission to attend school for the assessment only. S4-S6 pupils will continue to attend all classes on days that they do not have scheduled assessments and where possible pupils will be given the opportunity to study for their upcoming assessments. Teachers will

support with subject revision where required. Once S6 pupils have completed all of their assessments they do not need to return to timetabled classes.

16. **S6 Leavers:** St Thomas' Senior Leadership Team and Pupil Support Team wish to support S6 pupils in marking the end of their education at the school. I will be meeting with S6 pupils this week to gather their views on what they wish and for us to collectively plan what is achievable. I strongly believe that it would be neither achievable nor appropriate that a date(s) for a S6 event be set prior to the 11th of June as assessments will be ongoing. I do hope I have S6 parental support in guaranteeing that S6 pupils will attend school throughout the next 4 weeks and uphold the high standards of commitment and behaviour that this year group has shown throughout their very successful time at St Thomas.

17. **1:1 ICT plan**: To support all staff and all pupils using 1:1 ICT in session 2021-22, ICT engineers will be visiting St Thomas on **Friday 28th and Monday 31st May** to evaluate the school's wi-fi. I will continue to share information regarding the 1:1 roll-out when I receive it from CEC.

18. **Uniform:** I would like to thank families for continuing to support St Thomas on the wearing of full school uniform at St Thomas apart from PE timetable days. I am concerned though that some pupils are wearing white trainers, different coloured jumpers, and leggings without trousers or a skirt to school. A reminder that pupils should be wearing:

    Black shoes
    trousers/skirt white shirt
    and school tie black V-
    neck jumper optional
    school blazer.

    Details can be found on the school website of our expectations: https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OUR-SCHOOL-UNIFORM-2015-2016.pdf

    During this week I will be focussing on **S3 uniform** and I may be writing to parents personally to support their children wearing full uniform to St Thomas.

19. **Parent Council Fundraising - IT accessories for St Thomas pupils** We would be very grateful for your donations to help purchase IT accessories for the school. Already we have raised an amazing £330 but still have a long way to go to reach our £3,000 target before the end of June. Please donate by using this link https://paypal.me/pools/c/8xUCbkxMMk - you don't need a PayPal account and can use a debit card if you wish. The school and council are working on providing devices for every pupil in the next year, so we want to support this by providing accessories, such as keyboards, mice and stylus pens, to help pupils with their online learning and homework. Many thanks for your donations.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

WEEK BEGINNING, 10 MAY 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas', please find the HT briefing for Monday 10th May

20. Health and Safety:

On entering the building all members of the school community should wash or sanitise your hands, wear a face covering, and there should be a physical distance between adults and pupils.

All pupils should be supporting the cleaning of desks at the start and end of their lessons and wearing face coverings in classes.

Pupils and staff can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

If any person develops Covid-19 Symptoms please do not attend the school building and arrange for a Covid-19 test:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

21. **S1 Parents Evening**: Our final Parents evening of the year will be for our S1 year group. The S1 Parents Evening will be on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th May 5-7pm via telephone. I would like to thank all colleagues for supporting the plans for Parents Evenings this year.

22. **Final assessment support:** On the day that a pupil has a scheduled assessment, St Thomas' wishes to support their wellbeing by granting permission to attend school for the assessment only. S4-S6 pupils will continue to attend all classes on days that they do not have scheduled assessments and where possible pupils will be given the opportunity to study for their upcoming assessments. Teachers will support with subject revision where required.

23. **Equalities, anti-racism, and enhancing social justice**:
I will be meeting with the Equality group next week, Friday Lesson 3,to develop further pupil voice and action around supporting St Thomas' inclusive and compassionate school ethos.

24. **1:1 ICT plan**: I hope to share with all staff, parents, and pupils an update on the CEC ICT 1:1 roll out later on in May.

25. **Ascension Day – Thursday 13th May:** During RE this week, pupils will be focussing on The Ascension of Our Lord.

26. **Uniform:** I would like to thank families for continuing to support St Thomas on the wearing of full school uniform at St Thomas apart from PE timetable days. I am concerned though that some pupils are wearing white trainers, different coloured jumpers, and leggings without a trousers or a skirt to school. I will asking the Senior Leadership Team and the Pupil Support Team to support pupils in wearing the full school uniform at all times.

    A reminder that pupils should be wearing:
    Black shoes, trousers/skirt, white shirt and school tie, black V-neck jumper, optional school blazer. Details can be found on the school website of our expectations: https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OUR-SCHOOL-UNIFORM-2015-2016.pdf

27. **Parent Council Fundraising - IT accessories for St Thomas pupils**

    Please donate by using this link https://paypal.me/pools/c/8xUCbkxMMk for the school to buy IT Accessories like keyboards, mice, stylus pens to help pupils with their online learning/homework. The school and council are working on providing devices for every pupil in the next year, so we want to support this with accessories. To donate you don't need a PayPal account and can use a debit card if you wish. We are aiming to raise £3000 by the end of June and will start buying accessories as soon as possible to aid pupils. We will keep you all updated with our progress regularly on the school weekly briefing or you can see how well our fundraising is going, by accessing the PayPal link above.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

WEEK BEGINNING, 3 MAY 2021

Good Afternoon to the parents of St Thomas, please find the HT briefing for week beginning Monday 3rd May

1. **Health and Safety**:

With a return to full-time education for all pupils it is essential that pupils, staff, and parents support one another in keeping the school as healthy and safe as possible.

On entering the building all members of the school community should wash or sanitise your hands, wear a face covering, and there should be a physical distance between adults and pupils.

All pupils should be supporting the cleaning of desks at the start and end of their lessons and wearing face coverings in classes.

Pupils and staff can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

If any person develops Covid-19 Symptoms please do not attend the school building and arrange for a Covid-19 test:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

2. **S1 Parents Evening**: Our final Parents evening of the year will be for our S1 year group. The S1 Parents Evening will be on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th May 5-7pm via telephone. I would like to thank all colleagues for supporting the plans for Parents Evenings this year.

3. **Equalities, anti-racism, and enhancing social justice**:

As we move into the summer term and start planning for 2021-22, I would like us all to reflect on what St Thomas' inclusive visions and values looks like and feels like for all members of our community. The values of trust, openness, and mutual respect will support our community to continue to develop and enhance our social justice vision. Social justice in education refers to a commitment to challenging social, cultural, and economic inequalities imposed on individuals arising from any differential distribution of power, resources, and privilege. I have asked Madame Jean-Pierre to lead on drafting, as part of our 2021-22 renewal plan, 4 main areas for the school to transparently analyse, evaluate, and plan the way ahead in terms of supporting our community in anti-hate language and action. The 4 main action points of the plan will be:

- Processes to reporting racist/hate language
- Management of racist and hate-language incidents
- The curriculum being anti-racist, inclusive, and celebrating diversity
- The culture is inclusive and sufficiently supportive of all St Thomas' pupils

I will be meeting with the Equality group next week to develop further pupil voice and action around supporting St Thomas' inclusive and compassionate school ethos.

4. **2021-22 School renewal planning**: Please find attached the draft renewal plan priorities. The senior leadership team will be on Tuesday 4th May to draft a renewal plan. This plan will be shared with staff and families in order to ensure your voice is part of renewal in 2021-22.

5. **Learning and Teaching**: I will be purchasing display for all Faculties during May and June to support a consistent and dedicated wall space to celebrate pupils work. Once the boards have been bought and mounted, I will be asking the learning, teaching, and assessment working group to support how all Faculties showcase pupils' work on a regular basis.

6. **Parent Council Fundraising - IT accessories for St Thomas pupils**

   Please donate by using this link https://paypal.me/pools/c/8xUCbkxMMk for the school to buy IT Accessories like keyboards, mice, stylus pens to help pupils with their online learning/homework. The school and council are working on providing devices for every pupil in the next year, so we want to support this with accessories. To donate you don't need a PayPal account and can use a debit card if you wish. We are aiming to raise £3000 by the end of June and will start buying accessories as soon as possible to aid pupils. We will keep you all updated with our progress regularly on the school weekly briefing or you can see how well our fundraising is going, by accessing the PayPal link above.

7. **Congratulations** to Mr and Mrs Carruthers on the safe arrival of their baby daughter Neva Carruthers.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES
Website: www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk

WEEK BEGINNING, 26 APRIL 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the parents briefing for the week beginning Monday 26th April.

8. Health and Safety:

With a return to full-time education for all pupils it is essential that pupils, staff, and parents support one another in keeping the school as healthy and safe as possible.

On entering the building all members of the school community should wash or sanitize your hands, wear a face covering, and there should be a physical distance between adults and pupils.

All pupils should be supporting the cleaning of desks at the start and end of their lessons and wearing face coverings in classes.

Pupils and staff can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

If any person develops Covid-19 Symptoms please do not attend the school building and arrange for a Covid-19 test:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever/high temperature and/or
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

9. Staffing: Congratulations to Mr Rafferty who is the successful candidate for the part-time permanent St Andrews Pupil Support Leader post.

10. Tuesday 4th May In-Service: The May in-service will support Faculties with SQA assessment and moderation planning.

11. S1 Parents Evening: Our final Parents evening of the year will be for our S1 year group. The S1 Parents Evening will be on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th May 5-7pm via telephone. I would like to thank all colleagues for supporting the plans for Parents Evenings this year.

12. St Thomas of Aquin's Alternative Certificate Model: The school's Alternative Certificate Model (ACM) has been shared with staff, pupils, and parents prior to the Easter holidays and it can be accessed

on the school website https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/APRIL2021-Assessment-windows-final.pdf.

All schools are now in stage two roles and responsibilities of the ACM: Stage two takes place from now until the end of May and sees learning and teaching continuing, schools, colleges and training providers assessing learner evidence and providing them with feedback on their progress. The key elements of this stage are:

- Learning, teaching and consolidation of learning continues
- Schools begin to assess learner evidence to determine their demonstrated attainment, carrying out and recording decisions in line with internal quality assurance procedures
- Schools continue to provide feedback to learners on progress, including results based on evidence
- Schools continue to carry out and engage in internal quality assurance in line with their procedures and local authority / RIC quality assurance processes
- During May, on a proportionate basis, SQA will select courses from each school and college for national quality assurance and provide subject-specific feedback. A broad indication of the volume of courses that a centre can expect to be selected for and information on how to submit digital evidence where this is available, will be published on 23 April 2021.
- Schools start to develop provisional results based on the available learner evidence and feedback from local and national quality assurance, including checking that results are consistent across the centre and based on learner evidence
- SQA issues further information on how to submit the provisional results

13. **Timetable 2021-22**: Ms Stalker has completed a draft of the 2021-22 timetable, which will start on Monday 14th June, and she will meet with the senior leadership team this week for a final check before the data input.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School | 12- 20 Chalmers Street | Edinburgh | EH3 9ES

MONDAY, 29 MARCH 2021 – Parental Briefing

Good Morning to the Parents of St Thomas of Aquin's.

Please find a briefing email for the week beginning of Monday 29th March.

With Palm Sunday starting Holy week yesterday, I will be offering my prayers to all staff, pupils, and parents and wish you all a very happy Easter holidays.

The Scottish Government will be updating the nation on Tuesday 6th April regarding the full-time return of pupils to secondary schools after the Easter holidays. I will ensure an email is sent to all parents on Monday 19th April updating plans for the return of pupils on Tuesday 20th April.

1. **Monday 29th March to Thursday 1st April– Group A, B, and C timetable**

Monday 29th	**Tuesday 30th**	**Wednesday 31st**	**April 1st**	**Easter Holiday Good Friday**
Group C S4-S6 in school	**Group A S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	**Group B S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	**Group C S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	
Group A S1-S6 **Group B S1-S6** **Group C S1-S3** Remote Learning	**Group B S1-S6** **Group C S1-S6** Remote Learning	**Group A S1-S6** **Group C S1-S6** Remote Learning	**Group A S1-S6** **Group B S1-S6** Remote Learning	
School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	

2. **Staffing**: The part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader long-leet interviews will take place on Wednesday 31st March.

3. **Health and Safety**: **S1, S2, and S3 pupils** can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Miss Hunter's office is located in the Senior Leadership and Support for Learning Corridor. Lateral Flow Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S1-S6 pupils and staff using the building. Headteachers have been supported by Health and Safety communications this week and it has now been confirmed that S1-3 pupils can be issued kits during the last week of term and pupils can start testing after Easter. The Scottish Government is developing an online communications plan with Young Scot.

   Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

4. **St Thomas of Aquin's Alternative Certificate Model:** The school's Alternative Certificate Model (ACM) has been shared with staff, pupils, and parents. I am meeting with the school's Quality Improvement Education Officer, Rosie McColl, on Tuesday 30th March as well as holding a leadership team meeting focussing on our draft St Thomas of Aquin's ACM quality assurance document.

5. **Timetable 2021-22**: All course choice windows have been completed and setting for S3,S4,S5 & S6 has been finalised. Ms Stalker will now complete the writing of the 2021-22 timetable which will start on **Monday 14th June.**

I wish all families a very Happy Easter holidays.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School

MONDAY, 22 MARCH 2021 – Parental Briefing

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas.

Please find the staff briefing for week beginning **Monday 22nd March**.

Monday 22nd to Friday 26th of March – Group A, B, and C timetable

Monday 22nd	Tuesday 23rd	Wednesday 24th	Thursday 25th	Friday 26th

Group B S4-S6 in school	**Group C S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	**Group A S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	**Group B S1-S6** in school **S1-S3 leave at 1.10**	**Group A S4-S6 Lessons 1-3** (leave Back Gate) **Group B Lesson 4-5** All other pupils at home Staff prepare Remote Learning
Group A S1-S6 **Group C S1-S6** **Group B S1-S3** Remote Learning	**Group A S1-S6** **Group B S1-S6** Remote Learning	**Group B S1-S6** **Group C S1-S6** Remote Learning	**Group A S1-S6** **Group C S1-S6** Remote Learning	
School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils	School Hub for KW/I pupils

1. **Staffing**: The part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader post will close on Tuesday 23rd March. Ms Deborah Murray is the preferred candidate for the permanent Business Education Teacher post and I look forward to her working in St Thomas of Aquin's from August. Interviews for a permanent Religious Education Teacher took place on Friday 19th March and the successful candidate is Ms Georgiana Luncanu, the school's Religious Education probationer. We are all very happy that Ms Luncanu will continue to work at St Thomas' over the coming years.

2. **Health and Safety:**

   S1, S2, and S3 pupils can pick up an information letter and a consent form for Asymptomatic (Lateral flow Testing) Testing from Vivien Hunter. Miss Hunter's office is located in the Senior Leadership and Support for Learning Corridor. Lateral Flow Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S1-S6 pupils and staff using the building. Headteachers have been supported by Health and Safety communications this week and it has now been confirmed that S1-3 pupils can be issued kits during the last week of term and pupils can start testing after Easter. The Scottish Government is developing an online communications plan with Young Scot.

   Information on Lateral Flow Testing can be found on the school website - https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/

3. **School holiday survey:** CEC have prepared a survey about the timing of school holidays over the next three years. Parents and staff groups have contributed to the wording of the questions. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. The link to the survey is: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/schsd2022. The survey is open from Monday 1 March to Thursday 1 April 2021.

4. **St Thomas of Aquin's assessment Timeline:** Curricular Leaders have been working with Ms Mariani to draft the school's SQA assessment timeline. The senior leadership team are meeting this afternoon to finalise the draft and this will be shared with pupils, and parent from tomorrow.

   It is anticipated that all St Thomas' pupils will be returning to a full-time learning experience after the Easter holidays (if permitted by The Scottish Government). With a 2-week quality assurance period planned from the 14th June to support subject specialist staff, Curricular Leaders, and the Senior

Leadership Team having valid, reliable, practical, equitable, and fair assessment processes in place, it means there will be approximately 7 and ½ weeks from Tuesday 20th April to June 11th for pupils to complete their assessment experience.

St Thomas of Aquin's is planning for practice assessments from Tuesday 20th April and a National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher assessment window starting from the 13th May until the 11th June.

5. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: S4 and S5 pupils will complete their course choice process on Monday 22nd March. Course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parentscarers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher | St. Thomas of Aquin's High School

Monday 15th March

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parental briefing for week beginning **Monday 15th of March**.

1.Staffing: The part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader post has been advertised and will close on 23rd of March. Long-leet interviews for a permanent Business Education Teacher took place on Friday 12th of March and the short leet interviews will take place on Wednesday afternoon. Interviews for a permanent Religious Education Teacher will take place on Friday 19th of March.

2.Health and Safety: Asymptomatic testing – Vivien Hunter will lead on the system. Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S1-S6 pupils and staff using the building. Please consider taking up this supportive measure

3. School holiday survey: CEC have prepared a survey about the timing of school holidays over the next three years. Parents and staff groups have contributed to the wording of the questions. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. The link to the survey is: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/schsd2022. The survey is open from Monday 1 March to Thursday 1 April 2021.

4. Phased return to St Thomas:
St Thomas of Aquin's welcomes back S4-S6 pupils this morning and we are looking forward to having S1-S6 pupils in tomorrow, Wednesday, and Thursday. Pupils should be in full school uniform unless they are timetabled for PE, wearing face masks throughout the school building, and keep 2 metres physical distance between other pupils and staff.

Registration: All staff will be given a list of Groups A/B/C to support seemis registration. Admin colleagues have automatically updated seemis with the pupil groups who not in school during their remote learning days (pupil groups will be entered with the Covid-19 registration code).

Remote Learning: Education Scotland explains that to facilitate the phased return to schools for S1-S6 pupils, schools may need to consider any adaptations required to the offer of remote delivery. All staff will be in school on a full-time basis teaching their normal timetables classes and what has been referred to live learning during this lockdown will now be the focus of face to face classroom learning and teaching in the school building.

5. Draft Assessment Timeline: Ms Mariani will be collating a draft SQA assessment timeline to be shared with staff, pupils, and parent by the week of the 22nd of March.

6. Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline: S4 and S5 pupils will complete their course choice process on Monday 22nd of March. Course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Monday 8th March 2021

Good morning to the parents of St Thomas', please find the parental briefing for Monday 8th of March

1.Staffing: A part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader post will go live today, Monday 8th March. Adverts for permanent posts in Business Education and Religious Education close this wee

2.Health and Safety: Asymptomatic testing - Please take time to read the attached letter about Lateral Flow Testing. The school Admin Office will lead on the system. Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S4-S6 pupils and staff using the building. Please consider taking up this supportive measure

3. School holiday survey: CEC have prepared a survey about the timing of school holidays over the next three years. Parents and staff groups have contributed to the wording of the questions. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. The link to the survey is: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/schsd2022. The survey is open from Monday 1 March to Thursday 1 April 2021.

4. Phased return to St Thomas:
Please find attached a letter from Andy Gray (Chief education Officer) regarding the phased return of pupils on Monday 15th of March.

St Thomas' will be bringing back pupils to the school from Monday 15th of March in line with Education Scotland's Guidance for preparing in-school and remote learning for S1-S6 pupils. St Thomas' will be implementing Education Scotland's guidance within the context of what the school building and grounds allows as well as the number of specialist staff we have at our disposal. Education Scotland asks secondary schools to consider:

- Maintain 2m physical distancing between all pupils and between adults
- Prioritise lessons for pupils who are taking National Qualifications which will ensure that learning continues towards their qualifications under the 2021 Alternative Certification Model.
- Maintain provision for key worker children and identified pupils in the School Hub learners.
- Maximising the number of pupils who are receiving in-school learning while remote learning continues for others.
- Where possible, ensure all pupils receive some in-school education each week, for example, to help schools continue to connect with pupils, support their health and wellbeing and support the transition back to full time schooling.

Education Scotland explains that to facilitate the above, schools may need to consider any adaptations required to the offer of remote delivery.

During June 2020, St Thomas' Health and Safety Team (Mrs Ritchie, myself, Dr Wilson, and Mr Herbison) measured every single classroom to plan for a 2-metre rule amongst pupils and staff returning to the building. St Thomas building allows for a 33% of pupils to return to the school building with a 2metre rule in place. I have shared a compressive plan with the Leadership Team which I hope will be finalised by 12 noon on Monday 8th and share with all parents via a letter sent on Wednesday 10th of March.

5. **Draft Assessment Timeline:** Ms Mariani will be collating a draft SQA assessment timeline to be shared with staff, pupils, and parent by the week of the 22nd of March. Curricular Leaders will liaise with Ms Mariani to ensure that details are with her by Tuesday 16th of March.

6. **Equalities**: I would like St Thomas' to build upon the great work of St Thomas' Equalities group Anti-Racism Assemblies held in Autumn by asking the group to produce a series of posters identifying what pupils should do if they experience any form of Hate Language at St Thomas'. I will ask for the Equalities group to reconvene to produce this piece of work.

I have also asked that Faculties analyse and evaluate their curriculum to ensure 'Our curriculum is grounded in our commitment to securing children's rights and wellbeing.' In our diverse school community, our aim is that all children and young people will experience a curriculum that:

- positively reflects their identities, languages, cultures and histories
- is delivered with cultural awareness and sensitivity, using high quality resources • develops critical literacy

7. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: S4 and S5 pupils will complete their course choice process on Monday 22nd of March. Course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/.

8. **Spaces for People:** Many of you will have seen some of the temporary 'Spaces for People' measures at schools and around the city that are helping people to physically distance and travel safely during the Covid-19 pandemic. We've created extra space for pedestrians and wheelchairs in shopping areas as well as putting protected cycle lanes on some main roads. There's also extra space for exercise in some areas. You can find out more about these measures at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/spacesforpeople. We're now considering whether to keep in place some of the temporary measures in place for a longer trial period so we can test them out when pedestrians and traffic begins to get back to normal. We want to do this as many of the temporary measures are likely to help us achieve the Council's long-term objectives to improve how we travel, making it easier for people to get about, and to help us meet the city's net carbon-free targets.
Please fill in our online questionnaire. More information on www.edinburgh.gov.uk/streetschemes

Regards

Christopher Santini

Monday 1st March 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas', please find the parental briefing for Monday 1st of March

1.Staffing: Last week St Thomas' said farewell to Ms Batista. Ms Batista has been a great colleague to work with at the school and we wish her all the best at her new school in Paisley.
Ms Taylor, Pupil Support Leader of St Margaret's, will be returning to St Thomas' after the Easter holidays on a permanent part-time basis. I will be advertising for a part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader post in due course.

2. Insight Data: Please find attached a short summary of the very encouraging 2019-20 Insight data which went live this week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their strategic and operational role in improving the attainment and outcomes for pupils at St Thomas'.

3.Health and Safety: Asymptomatic testing - Please take time to read the attached letter about Lateral Flow Testing. The school Admin Office will lead on the system. Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S4-S6 pupils and staff using the building.

Please consider taking up this supportive measure

4. 2021-22 Timetable: In a normal school session the new timetable starts in the first week of June, however with Senior Phase assessments still to be planned I am considering moving the change of the Timetable to the latter stages of June to support the SQA assessment timeline. I will keep staff, pupils, and parents informed of the Timetable construction and its start date. This would mean S6 pupils will continue to be in school until the change of the Timetable.

5. Phased return to St Thomas: Please go to https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learningopportunities/senior-phase-updates/ to find the Senior Phase Essential Practical Work Timetable for S4S6 pupils return to school. When pupils come into the school it is important they are,

- wearing school uniform,
- sanitising their hands-on arrival and wearing face masks at all times,
- socially distancing (2 metres) from **staff and other pupils** at all times.

8. Remote Learning: Ms Mariani has shared a summary presentation of the Parent and Pupil Surveys with all staff and parents this week. A new S1 and S2 Remote Learning structure will be in place for Monday 1st of March and I have attached the updated model along with the S4-6 live interaction TT. I would like to thank the Leadership Team of the school in developing this new model.

If any pupil is without access to ICT please can parents get in touch with the identified Pupil Support Leader.

9. Equalities: I would like St Thomas' to build upon the great work of St Thomas' Equalities group Anti-Racism Assemblies held in Autumn by asking the group to produce a series of posters identifying what pupils should do if they experience any form of Hate Language at St Thomas'. I will ask for the Equalities group to reconvene remotely to produce this piece of work.

10. Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline: S4 and S5 pupils will start their course choice process on Monday 1st of March. Course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/.

Regards

Christopher Santini

Monday 22nd February 2021

Goodmorning Parents of St Thomas', please find the HT briefing for Monday 22nd of February

1.Staffing: An advert for a permanent Business Education Teacher and a permanent Religious Education Teacher will be placed Myjobscotland this week.

2.Health and Safety: Asymptomatic testing - Please take time to read the attached letter about Lateral Flow Testing. The school Admin Office will lead on the system. Testing is voluntary and is being offered for S4-S6 pupils and staff using the building.

3.SQA: Following the First Minister's announcement earlier this week, the National Qualifications Group is sharing revised arrangements for the Alternative Certification Model and the timeline for delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results in session 2020-21. Further information about the Appeals service for 2021 will be available following consultation. The Group appreciates that Teachers and Lecturers are working hard to ensure the best remote learning experience possible for their learners and that time will be needed to consolidate learning once they are back in the classroom. The final date for submitting provisional results has therefore been extended to **Friday 25 June 2021**.The revised alternative certification model is based on five key stages:

- **Stage 1**: ongoing until April 2021 – Teachers and lecturers access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials and webinars from SQA.
- **Stage 2**: April to May 2021 – School, college, training provider and local authority quality assurance continues. During May, SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on assessment evidence from each school, college and training provider.
- **Stage 3**: end May to 25 June 2021 – Schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities and SQA work through final stages of local and national quality assurance and feedback, to reach provisional results that are consistent, equitable and fair.
- **Stage 4**: by 25 June 2021 – Schools, colleges and training providers submit quality assured provisional results to SQA.
- **Stage 5**: Appeals process for 2020–21 – To be advised following consultation.

4. Phased return to St Thomas: Please find attached the Senior Phase Essential Practical Work Timetable for S4-S6 pupils return to school. St Thomas' is looking forward to welcoming back some of our S4-S6 pupils. When pupils come into the school it is important that they are:

1. Wearing school uniform
2. Sanitising their hands-on arrival and wearing face masks at all times.
3. Socially distancing (2 metres) from **staff and other pupils** at all times.

Once their learning session has completed exit the school building and return home.

5.Remote Learning: Ms Mariani has shared a summary presentation of the Parent and Pupil Surveys with all staff and will be sharing this with parents this week.

6.S4-S6 Tracking: The quality assurance of S4-S6 Tracking reports has been completed and we will post the reports to parents week beginning Monday 22nd of February. Thanks to all staff for support S5 and S6 Parents' Evening on Wednesday and Thursday.

7.Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline: The date for S3 pupils completing their S4 course choices is Monday 22nd of February.

S5 and S5 pupils will start their course choice process on Monday 1st of March.

Course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parentscarers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/

8.And finally…

A news link MSPs backing a motion to reform SQA and Education Scotland https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-56104641

A news link to CEC proposal for free Ipads to all school pupils https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/politics/council/council-tax-freeze-and-freeipads-pupils-agreed-city-council-rubber-stamps-budget-3139731

Regards

Christopher Santini

Thursday 18th Feb 2021

Good Morning Parents of S4, S5, and S6 pupils

Please find attached the Senior Phase Timetable for bringing back a very small amount of S4, S5, and S6 pupils into the school (between 5-8% of the school roll). The focus of the return of small groups of Senior Phase pupils is the completion of critical practical work in relation to 2021 qualifications that can only be carried out in school. The attached Timetable identifies the subjects and subject levels that are essential at present and the Timetable may be adapted to meet the needs of other pupils completing critical work in other subjects and levels where necessary.

Key Faculty staff have set out a clear purpose for pupils coming into school to make the most effective use of school time. Remote Learning will still be the primary delivery model, with in-school practical learning only used when necessary. This may mean that pupils come into school for a specific subject session and not return to that subject session for a week or even two weeks. Subject Teachers will be communicating with S4, S5, and S6 pupils to ensure they know what the specific learning purpose for the sessions is.

Over the next 2 days, School Admin colleagues will email parents with specific dates and times when their children should come into school and Teachers will communicate with pupils via MS Teams. St Thomas will also support daily attendance with a phonecall home if a pupil has not come into school.

The morning sessions run from 9.00 – 11.30 am The
afternoon sessions run from 12.30-3.00pm

When pupils come into the school it is important that they are:

1. Wearing full school uniform.
2. Sanitising their hands on arrival and wearing face masks at all times.
3. Socially distancing (2 metres) from **staff and other pupils** at all times.

I would like to thank the Timetabling group of Ms Stalker, Mr Green, Mrs Lauckner, and Mr Lodge for their work in developing our model

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 15th February 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas'

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a restful February break and are ready for the next 6 ½ weeks of learning. I have attached a PDF copy of Education Scotland's return of Senior Phase learners. The short life Timetable group have already shared a St Thomas' Timetable with all of the Leadership group before the February break and our plans in bringing back around 5-8% of S4-S6 pupils from next Monday is in line with ES guidance. With a final decision being made by the Scottish Government on Tuesday 16th of February, I will have a final draft plan sent to families by Thursday, 18th of February.

With Senior Phase pupils only coming into school for critical practical work that can only be carried out in school, I am meeting with key Faculty Leaders tomorrow morning to discuss the needs of their Faculty subjects and then I will meet with the Timetabling group to confirm our plans.

I have also attached an Edinburgh Council remote Learning guidance paper for parents which has been circulated on their website.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 8th February 2021

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas', please find the HT briefing for Monday 8th of February

1. **Staffing**: Mrs Nicolson and I interviewed for the Business Education Teacher position on Friday 5th of February and I will update the school once the process has been completed.

2. **Health and Safety meeting**: St Thomas' Health and Safety Team will next meet on Wednesday 17th of February. This is the most up to date science link I have on the phased return to Schools: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid19-advisory-sub-group-on-educationand-childrens-issues---advice-on-phased-return-to-in-person-learning-in-schools-and-early-learningand-childcare-elc-settings/

3. **Phased return to St Thomas**: An initial draft Timetable for S4-S6 pupils to return to school has by created by the school's timetabling group . Scottish Government guidance has yet to be shared with schools and so the definition of what essential practical work is still open for debate. The question I am asking of all Curricular Leaders is, what practical work is essential to bring pupils and staff into the building that cannot be completed at home?

   I will update parents on Thursday 18th of February once The Scottish Government has confirmed their plans.

6. **Remote Learning:**
   The Senior Leadership Team have worked with a group of Parents to answer Frequently Asked Questions and this has been placed on our website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learning-opportunities/faq/

   I have asked Ms Mariani to complete a summary analysis of the Parents and Pupil surveys and after the February break this will be shared with the school community.

8. **S4-S6 Tracking**: A S4-S6 Tracking Report focussing on Progress, Homework, Effort, and Next Steps in learning, and a predicted next stage of learning for session 2021-22 will be completed and quality assured by the 17th of February. We hope to post the reports to parents week beginning Monday 22nd of February.

9. **S5-6 Parents Evenings**: S5-6 Parents Evening will take place on Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th of February.

10. **Parent Council**: The revised date for The parent Council is Tuesday 16th of February at 7.00pm. The Parent Council will email out a MS Teams link to parents. Please contact Alan Seywright at alanseywright71@gmail.com for a link to the meeting. A further meeting will be held on 29th April and the AGM will be held on 8th June.

11. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: S3 pupils will be starting their S4 course choices as of Monday 1st of February and course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/

Regards

Christopher Santini

Wednesday 3rd February

Good Morning to the parents of St Thomas'

Following on from the First Minister's statement yesterday in The Scottish Parliament, I would like to update you on how St Thomas' will plan for pupils returning to school after the February break on Monday 22nd of February.

I am meeting with all Curricular and Pastoral Leaders this afternoon to start planning for the return for a limited number of Senior Phase pupils for essential practical work only. The maximum amount of pupils in school will be no more than 5 to 8% of a secondary school roll at one time.

I have set up a Timetable Working Group to identify how the school will structure the essential practical work requirements and approach in which pupils will be in school. The Working Group are meeting this week and we will have a draft plan completed by Friday 5th of February.

With updated guidance from The Scottish Government being sent to School Leaders during the February holiday, I would like to ensure that any local planning by St Thomas' adheres to the National Health and Safety guidance for reopening schools safely. With a final decision being made by the Scottish Government on Tuesday 16th of February, I will have a final draft plan sent to families by Thursday, 18th of February.

Please find below a summary update from The Scottish Government and the full FM statement can be found here https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-2-february-2021/

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 1st February

Goodmorning to the Parents of St Thomas', please find the Parental briefing for Monday 1st of February.

1. **Thanks**: I would like to thank all staff in supporting the St Thomas School Hub and for the delivery of the S1-S6 Remote Learning this week including the 51 S4-S6 live interactions sessions offered by 11 Faculties last week.

   Please find attached a letter to parents regarding the February Holiday.

2. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mr Carruthers in becoming a permanent Maths Teacher at St Thomas'. Mrs Nicholson and I will be meeting to plan for Business Education Teacher interviews on Friday morning.

3. **SQA update**: Please find a link to the latest SQA news - Update from the National Qualifications 2021 Group: National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher - 27 January - SQA

4. **Health and safety meeting**: Every Monday, St Thomas' Health and Safety Team will meet virtually to ensure all Covid-19 protocols are in place.

5. **ICT:** St Thomas' has ICT support in place for pupils not able to access online learning. Please get in touch with the Integrated Support Team if support is required.

6. **Remote Learning:**
   St Thomas wishes to support our pupils as best we can and the Remote Learning parent survey will support us in identifying our good practice as well as supporting improvements in our existing framework. Thank to the parents who have already completed the survey sent by Ms Mariani.

Please attached our February Remote Learning Policy update which is also now live on the school website. The Senior Leadership Team are working with a group of Parents to answer Frequently Asked Questions and this will also be placed on our website: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/onlinelearning-opportunities/

8. **S4-S6 Tracking**: A S4-S6 Tracking Report focussing on Progress, Homework, Effort, and Next Steps in learning, and a predicted next stage of learning for session 2021-22 will be completed and quality assured by the 17th of February. We hope to post the reports to parents week beginning Monday 22nd of February.

9. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: S3 pupils will be starting their S4 course choices as of Monday 1st of February and course choice sheets can be found at https://www.st-thomas-ofaquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 25th January 2021

Goodmorning to the Parents of St Thomas', please for the Parental briefing for Monday 25th of January.

1. **Thanks**: I would like to thank all staff in supporting the St Thomas School Hub and for the delivery of the S1-S6 Remote Learning last week including the S4-S6 live interactions sessions offered by 15 subjects.

2. **Staffing**: I will be contacting all parents later on this week with an update on the Maths interviews conducted on Friday 22nd of January.

3. **Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquinas**: Fr Samuel will offer Mass for the School Feast Day at 10am on Thursday 28 January. You will be able to watch the Mass live by using the link below. If you are unable to be there at 10am, you should be able to watch it retrospectively on the 'recordings' tab. https://scotland.op.org/live/ Livestream - scotland.op.org

4. **SQA Parent guide**: Please find a SQA guide for parents which was prepared by CEC.

5. **Health and safety meeting**: Every Monday, St Thomas' Health and Safety team will meet virtually to ensure all Covid-19 protocols are in place.

6. **Remote Learning policy and vision:** The live Remote Learning policy document has been shared with parents since Monday 11th of January and has been placed on the school website. Please find a link below: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learning-opportunities/remote-learning-policy/.

The senior leadership team are working on a February update and this will be emailed to all staff and parents once it is completed.

On Friday 15th of January I shared with parents' the vision for St Thomas' Remote Learning. St Thomas' wishes to be as aspirational as possible for all of our pupils whilst working within the Edinburgh Learns guidance and using Education Scotland's advice to develop and enhance our delivery from Lockdown 1.

The vision will help the school community shape a Parent and pupil survey which we hope to send by Friday 29th of January.

7. **Pupil Feedback and Engagement**: All of the St Thomas' community wish to have the best pupil engagement via MS Teams and with staff planning engaging, thought provoking, accessible, and active Remote Learning the majority of pupils will indeed engage. Parents will be able look at their child's MS Teams individual work and feedback by using the Assignment/Feedback tools in MS Teams. Please ask you child to show you the Assignment tab at the top of the MS Team class page.

   To support pupils who are not engaging on MS Teams, the following protocol from Lockdown 1 has been reinstated:

   - Teacher to liaise with Curricular Leader regarding pupil non-engagement (non-access of MS Teams and non-submission of set work on a weekly basis).
   - Curricular Leader to support Teacher with communication text to Family if non-engagement persists (CC in PSL).
   - Pupil Support Leader to take lead of the pupil's non-engagement if text communication does not support pupil engagement.
   - Pupil Support Leader to liaise Depute Head Teacher if non-engagement persists and the DHT will phone home to speak with Parents regarding the pupil's engagement.

8. **S4-S6 Tracking**: St Thomas' will not be able to use the normal Edict S4-S6 Tracking system for the 3rd Senior Phase Tracking Report. Ms Mariani is working with Curricular Leaders on a remote Tracking spreadsheet which will be individually formatted and sent to families. I will be updating S4-S6 parents with a confirmed posting date before the February break.

9. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: The 2021-22 Course choices are on the school website and can be found https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/course-choice/.

   All S2 pupils should have now completed their S3 course choices – Please go to the school's website https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/ and scroll down on the home page to find the S2 coursing link.

   A senior course choice booklet will be uploaded to the school website by the end of January and Parents and pupils have access to whole school and Faculty SQA attainment results in the attainment and achievement section: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones

Regards
Christopher

Christopher Santini

Monday 18th January 2021

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the parental briefing for Monday 18th of January.

1. **Thanks**: I would like to thank all Colleagues in supporting the St Thomas School Hub and for the delivery of the first week of S1-S6 Remote Learning materials.

2. **Staffing**: Congratulations on Ms Batista's successful interview with St Andrew's Academy in Paisley. Ms Reid and I will be interviewing for a Maths Teacher on Friday 22nd of January.

3. **Health and safety meeting**: Every Monday, St Thomas' Health and Safety team will meet virtually to ensure all Covid-19 protocols are in place.

4. **Remote Learning policy and vision:** The live Remote Learning policy document has been shared with parents since Monday 11th of January and has been placed on the school website. Please find a link below: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learning-opportunities/remote-learning-policy/.

   On Friday 15th of January I shared with parents' the vision for St Thomas' Remote Learning. St Thomas' wishes to be as aspirational as possible for all of our pupils whilst working within the Edinburgh Learns guidance and using Education Scotland's advice to develop and enhance our delivery from Lockdown 1.

   Remote Learning vision:

- Engaging, thought provoking, accessible, and active Remote Learning experiences will be at the centre of our planning. As Education Scotland advises all Scottish Teachers it is important that "a didactic model does not become the norm". Our Remote Learning should include reading, doing, creating and inventing, playing, problem solving, observing and investigating with a reminder that some of the best learning is away from screens and technology.

- Every staff member to work with their Curricular Leader and Ms Mariani to plan and upload weekly learning presentations with recorded stimulus embedded for most of their classes.

- The S1-S3 flexible TT structure will support pupils and staff in ensuring there is adequate time for the completion of work by pupils and that Faculty arranged weekly detailed feedback planning is in place. Timely and detailed pupil feedback is integral to our Remote Learning improvement. All planned learning will be uploaded onto MS Teams by 9am on Mondays.

- S4, S5, and S6 pupils will have access to all of the recorded Remote Learning presentations and work required for their National Qualifications subjects. All planned learning will be uploaded onto MS Teams by 9am on Mondays. There will be daily opportunities for pupils to interact with specialist subject staff and timely and detailed pupil feedback is in place for pupils. Curricular Leaders are working with Ms Mariani on a S4-S6 "live study support Timetable" to support Faculties in offering this interactive experience to Senior Phase pupils.

- Detailed and time-framed feedback for all pupils is essential to improve our Remote Learning from Lockdown 1 and with the delivery of quality and timed-framed feedback, Colleagues and Faculties can then plan for and support an equitable approach to the assessment of the Remote Learning.

- A universal and targeted approach to support all pupils' wellbeing. The Integrated Support Team will continue their targeted support for individual pupils and families with Young Person's Planning Meetings, MS Teams calls, and weekly contact via email and calls. The Integrated Support Team will also provide Universal support by adding the 'ask my teacher' function to each of their TEAMS pages. This will allow pupils to have live interactions with Support Leaders between 10.30-11.30 every Tuesday. These slots could be increased if well received and pupil engagement/ demand is high.

  I have asked Ms Mariani to liaise with the Chair of the Parent Council to identify parents who would like to work with Ms Mariani in creating a Frequently Asked Questions communication for all parents and support the Senior Leadership Team in developing a pupils and parent survey.
  I will be liaising with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and other Parent Council members on a weekly basis to continue to enhance the very good working relationships between the school and parents.

5. **S1-3 Tracking Report:** All S-S3 Tracking reports were sent out on Wednesday 13th of January. I would like to thank the Admin Team for this great piece of work.

6. **S3 Parents Evening**: I would like to thank all staff and parents with the success in our delivery of the S3 Parents Evening in the first full week of our return to St Thomas'. I will ask Madame Jean-Pierre to send out a survey to S3 Parents for feedback.

7. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: The 2021-22 Course choices are on the school website and can be found https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-forexcellence/course-choice/.

   A senior course choice booklet will be uploaded to the school website by the end of January and Parents and pupils have access to whole school and Faculty SQA attainment results in the attainment and achievement section: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/about/achievements/

8. To support parents please find a printable copy of the BGE flexible Remote Learning timetable:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
S1	• Maths • CDT • PE	• Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies	• Science • History • Geography	• Art • Computing • Food and Textile technologies	• English • RE • Drama
S2	• English • RE • Drama	• Maths • CDT • PE	• Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies	• Science • History • Geography	• Art • Computing • Food and Textile technologies
S3	• Art • Computing • Practical Cookery • Environmental Science	• English • RE • Drama • Chemistry	• Maths • Design and Manufacture • Graphic Communication • PE	• Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies	• Biology • History • Geography • Physics

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones

Regards

Christopher

Christopher Santini

Monday 11th January 2021

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's

Please find the first Monday parental briefing of the New Year.

1. **Thanks**: I would like to thank all staff in supporting the reopening of St Thomas, implementing a collegiately planned School Hub, and preparing S1-S6 online learning materials for the week beginning Monday 11th of January. All pupils are to log into MS Teams this morning and there will be work available to complete from all Faculties for the week beginning Monday 11th of January.

2. **St Thomas' School Hub**: The school hub is organised for Key Worker and invited pupils and I have a staff rota in place for January. Please find attached the St Thomas School Hub roles and responsibilities.

3. **Remote learning**: I attended an MS Teams CEC HT meeting on Remote Learning on Friday 8th of January which focussed on the new CEC guidance for schools to use. Please find attached the CEC Remote Learning guidance for Parents.

   I will be holding a Leadership Team meeting on Wednesday at 9.30am to discuss the Edinburgh Learns guidance and Scottish Government/HMIe Remote Learning documents. The reason for scheduling the St Thomas' Leadership meeting on Wednesday 13th is to allow our Curricular Leaders and Teachers time to read, digest, and plan from the CEC and SG/HMIe guidance which was issued on Friday last week.

   The CEC guidance for Remote Learning includes the following options which teachers may adopt.

   1. Providing learning tasks online through a digital medium such as Microsoft Teams
   2. Weekly check-ins with the teacher to provide support with learning and feedback
   3. Recorded (asynchronous) learning which learners can access flexibly through the week.
   4. Live (synchronous) learning - it is not expected that an entire in-school class lesson should be replicated.

   Teachers will select from the above as appropriate, to best meet the needs of their learners and their context. There is no expectation that teachers must offer all of these options.

   St Thomas' is committed to improving the pupil and parent Remote Learning experience from Lockdown 1 and delivering a high quality, engaging and equitable remote learning experience. St Thomas' staff have been continuing to build on their knowledge and understanding of the use of digital learning and Microsoft Teams since lockdown 1 to ensure that the learning and teaching experience

continues to be the highest of standards for all pupils. St Thomas' wishes to plan to not only get our initial Remote Learning plans as comprehensive as possible but to plan for continued improvement.

Education Scotland defines Remote Learning as learning that is directed by practitioners and undertaken by children and young people who are not physically with the practitioner while instruction is taking place. Remote Learning may involve a combination of 'live' interactions between teacher and learners, and also learning which takes place away from the direct presence of the class teacher. Education Scotland explains that Remote Learning can offer pupils:

1. significant autonomy over their learning
2. a degree of flexibility for learners in where and when they learn
3. potential for high quality consolidation of learning
4. opportunities to develop and improve their skills in working independently
5. increased opportunities for personalisation in learning
6. opportunities for improved engagement
7. enhanced parental engagement in their child's learning away from school.

Please find attached Education Scotland's Remote Learning Guidance.

Ms Mariani is strategically leading the school's Remote Learning plans for all S1-S6 pupils. All S1-S6 pupils are to log into MS Teams this morning and they will find specific work to complete for week beginning Monday 11th of January.

St Thomas' is planning for S1-S3 pupils to follow a simplified remote learning Timetable which we believe will help pupils complete their work in a more manageable approach and support staff in giving timely and focussed feedback to classes and individual pupils. This structure will involve pupils accessing prepared work on MS Teams, the opportunity to check in with Teachers and other pupils about their learning, and the opportunity to experience recorded "chunked" lesson opportunities.

St Thomas' is also planning a S4-S6 learning structure which will support pupils accessing the recording of "chunked" lesson opportunities, timely feedback on new topics to support pupils' National Qualification progression and may involve live "chunked" lesson opportunities.

Ms Mariani will be updating the St Thomas' online learning opportunity page on the school website on a regular basis: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/online-learning-opportunities/ and she will continue to provide all parents in S1-6 with a weekly update regarding learning, teaching and assessment.

4. **2021 Prelims and Assessment windows**: The 2021 Prelim and formal assessment timetables have been postponed until Schools reopen for all pupils. As a contingency plan, St Thomas' prelims will begin on the Friday of the first week back of full time face to face learning (If there is a planned return to schools on Monday 1st of February this would mean the first prelim exam would take place on Friday 5th of February). This will give pupils the opportunity to meet with their teachers in person before embarking on the prelim diet. Please note- This is subject to change should further announcements be made from the Scottish Government.

   Ms Mariani and I, along with Curricular Leaders, will have to reassess the dates for the National 5 assessment windows and once we have a clearer steer on the reopening dates for schools we will be back in communication with all pupils and parents.

5. **S3 Parents Evening**: S3 Parents Evening will take place on **Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th of January**. As we are in a National lockdown Headteachers have been asked to ensure as few staff members are in the building as possible. Staff will be calling parents using the **blocked function** on their mobile phones. I am asking all S3 Parents to check their phones are able to receive "blocked" numbers to access the Parent/Teacher meeting. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

6. **Feast Day of St Thomas of Aquinas**: Fr Samuel will offer Mass for the School Feast Day at 10am on Thursday 28 January. You will be able to watch the Mass live by using the link below. If you are unable to be there at 10am, you should be able to watch it retrospectively on the 'recordings' tab. https://scotland.op.org/live/ Livestream - scotland.op.org

7. **Course Choice Sheets and Coursing timeline**: Please find the 2021-22 Course Choice sheets and Coursing Timelines which will be placed on the school website. A draft coursing timeline has also been attached to support pupils and parents understanding of the dates for remote coursing.

Please take care of yourselves and your families.

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 21st December

Goodafternoon to the Community of St Thomas'

Please find the last parental briefing of 2020. This has been quite an exceptional and challenging year and I cannot thank staff, pupils, and parents for their collective effort and support this year. I do hope you all enjoy a relaxing and peaceful holiday. Merry Christmas from the St Thomas woodwind ensemble to all https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLg6YvrbIxyS7hvdYZg93kLE4pPXboW3jN

1. St Thomas of Aquin's is open today and tomorrow and pupils are expected to attend in full uniform. The Scottish Government has communicated that Scottish Schools will return from Tuesday 5th of January for staff, vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. All other pupils will start remote learning on Monday 11th of January before a full return on Monday 18th January. St Thomas' will clarify the definition of what constitutes a Key worker shortly and we will get back to all parents.

2. **Health and Safety**: It is essential that all of the St Thomas' community follow the Scottish Government's direction during the last week of term

If a pupil or staff member have any of the below symptoms, **please stay at home**, and follow the NHS guidance.

- New continuous cough and/or
- Fever/high temperature and/or
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

3. **Sisters of Mercy**: I was very pleased to meet Sister Aelred, at a social distance, on Friday 11th of December to hand over a donation from St Thomas' to support the great work of The Sisters of Mercy. Please keep them in your prayers throughout Advent.

4. **End of term**: The school will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 22nd of December. S4-6 pupils will be dismissed at 11.45am and S1-S3 pupils dismissed at 12 noon.

5. **Thank you so much to all those who participated in St. T's 2020 Challenge**. We completely smashed our 2020km target with a total of 3379km - so well done to all our walkers, runners, swimmers and cyclists. A special well done to Lori Ferrante Addison, James Kennedy, Alice Perry and William Doyle who notched up the biggest distances for walking, running, swimming and cycling respectively - please get in touch to arrange dispatch of prizes (jo72.phillips@yahoo.co.uk). We have raised £440 of our £500 target so any last minute donations would be gratefully received https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/2020-challenge

   On 1st January we will start our new 2021 challenge - please use the same google document link https://forms.gle/psLGMmx7WVEG1KxJAwhich you can access via your phones. As well as contributing to the St. T's total you may want to set your own challenge. Could you complete 2021km in your family, with a group of friends or even on your own!!! (Definitely easier for cyclists). Whatever your target, it would be great to get as many families involved as possible. Perhaps we could even get a facebook page set up to share experiences, recommend routes and organise group events (when we're allowed). In the meantime, enjoy the holiday and lets look forwards to an active 2021.

   St. Thomas Parent Council

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 14 th of December

Goodmorning to the Parents of St Thomas', please find the briefing for Monday 14 th of December

1. **Health and Safety**: It is essential that all of the St Thomas' community follow the

Scottish Government's direction during the last week of term

If a pupil or staff member have any of the below symptoms, **please stay at home**, and follow the NHS guidance.

- New continuous cough and/or
- Fever/high temperature and/or
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

Please find 2 letters regarding the Christmas holidays and Self-isolation

2. **Pupil Track & Trace:** Senior Leaders in Scottish Schools lead their own Test and Track systems if there is a Positive Covid-19 case in a school. I would like to thank Mrs Ritchie, Madame Jean-Pierre, and Ms Mariani for all of their work this term with our small number of positive cases.

   To support all school staff with their holidays, track and trace for schools will be covered by Health Protection on the 24 th and 25 th December.

   From **Thursday 17 th of December until Tuesday 22 nd of December,** I am asking all staff take **10-15 minutes** at the beginning of all their lessons to share the seating plans (plus date/time of class) on the smart board to pupils.

   Pupils will need to either write down all their contacts within 2m distancing* in their subject jotter. (I would ask them to complete this at the back Pupils could draw the tables surrounding them and write names or
   Pupils could be allowed to take a photograph on their phone (ensuring no faces are captured). **Please speak with you children to ensure they understand how important it is to keep these records safe. I will send out a letter to all parents explaining later on this week to explain the details.**

3. **End of term**: The school will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 22nd of December. S4-6 pupils will be dismissed at 11.45am and S1-S3 pupils dismissed at 12 noon.

4. **Staffing**: I would like to thank Mrs Vokes, who will be retiring on Tuesday 22 nd of December, for her dedication to St Thomas of Aquin's and the compassionate support she has put in place for so many of our pupils. We will miss Anne greatly and on behalf of us all, I wish her a happy retirement.

   Congratulations Ms Batista who is the successful candidate for the permanent Maths position in St Andrews High School in Paisley. I would like to thank Patricia for all of her work in the Maths Faculty and her fantastic support as part of our Chaplaincy Team.

5. **S3 Parents Evening:** S3 Parents Evening is planned for Wednesday 13 th and Thursday 14th of January 2021.

6. **Advent House gatherings**: During the week beginning Monday 14 th , Mr Wotherspoon and the RE team will lead S1-S6 Advent gatherings during RE lessons. Please see the attached Chaplaincy newsletter.

7. **S5-6 Full Reports**: S5 and S6 Reports have been completed and after the quality assurance time for CLs we hope to have the reports ready for pupils on Friday 18 th of December.

   S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7 th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December. Reports will be handed out during the first week of school in January.

8. **2020-21 SQA summary update** : The DFM confirmed on Tuesday 8 th of December that Higher and Advanced Higher Exams will be cancelled for 2021; "I am therefore announcing today that there will be no Higher or Advanced Higher exams in 2021. Instead we will adopt the new model that has been developed and base awards on teacher judgement of evidence of learner attainment. This is safe. It is fair. And it better recognises the reality of the disruption so many pupils have already had to their learning in the course of the last few months.

   St Thomas will work with all stakeholders to ensure that the attainment and wellbeing of all St Thomas' pupils is at the centre of our plans going forward. St Thomas' January S5 and S6 prelim timetable has been shared with all senior pupils and parents and the prelim Timetable can be found on the school website (https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Prelims-2021-Parent-pupil-version-final.pdf).Once the details of how S5 and s6 pupils estimates are to be gathered I will communicate this to all pupils and parents.

   The National 5 assessment window dates are in draft form below and Ms Mariani has shared with pupils and parents a detailed schedule of when subjects will be assessing during these dates.

- Week beg 18/1
- Week beg 22/2
- Week beg 20/3
- Week beg 26/4
- Week beg 10/5

9. 2020 / 2021 CHALLENGE

Thank you so much to all those who participated in St. T's 2020 Challenge. We completely smashed our 2020km target with a total of 3379km - so well done to all our walkers, runners, swimmers and cyclists. A special well done to Lori Ferrante Addison, James Kennedy, Alice Perry and William Doyle who notched up the biggest distances for walking, running, swimming and cycling respectively - please get in touch to arrange dispatch of prizes (jo72.phillips@yahoo.co.uk). We have raised £410 of our £500 target so any last minute donations would be gratefully received https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/2020-challenge

On 1st January we will start our new 2021 challenge - please use the same google document link https://forms.gle/psLGMmx7WVEG1KxJA

which you can access via your phones. As well as contributing to the St. T's total you may want to set your own challenge. Could you complete 2021km in your family, with a group of friends or even on your own!!! (Definitely easier for cyclists). Whatever your target, it would be great to get as many families involved as possible. Perhaps we could even get a facebook page set up to share experiences, recommend routes and organise group events (when we're allowed). In the meantime, enjoy the holiday and lets look forwards to an active 2021!

St. Thomas Parent Council

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 7 thof December

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas of Aquin's. Please find the parental briefing for Monday 7th of December

10. **Health and Safety**: It is essential that all of the St Thomas' community follow the Scottish Government's direction

    If a pupil or staff member have any of the below symptoms, please stay at home, and follow the NHS guidance.

    - New continuous cough and/or
    - Fever/high temperature and/or
    - Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

    The St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety Team meet every **Monday Lesson 5** to ensure the H&S systems at St Thomas' are working for pupils, staff, and parents.

11. **End of term**: The school will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 22nd of December.

12. **Staffing**: Congratulations to Mr Murray in becoming Acting Pupil Support Leader for St Andrews House on Fridays. Mr Murray will start his remit in January 2021.

13. **S3 Parents Evening:** I will ask Jo Ritchie, the school's Business Manager, to start planning for the S3 parents evenings on Wednesday 13 th and Thursday 14 th of January 2021.

14. **Edinburgh Schools Kayak Club**: Any St Thomas' pupil interested in joining this club, it meets every Friday afternoon at Meggetland Community sports hub. Please see Mrs Berry in the PE Faculty (Mondays/Tuesdays) if they wish more info, or click on the link www.edinburghschoolskayakclub.com

15. **Feast Day of St Andrew**: Thanks to Mrs stark, The S6 House captains, and all staff for a great experience on Monday 30 th of November.

16. **Advent House gatherings**: During the week beginning Monday 14 th , Mr Wotherspoon and the RE team will lead S1-S6 Advent gatherings during RE lessons. Please see the attached Chaplaincy newsletter.

17. **S5-6 Full Reports**: S5 and S6 Reports have been completed and after the quality assurance time for CLs we hope to have the reports ready early next week. S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7 th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December.

18. **Food Collection for the Trussell Trust: Tuesday 1 December to Friday 11 December.** There will be a trolley at the school entrance for pupils to drop off their donations. Donations can include:

- Cereal, Soup, Pasta, Rice, Tinned tomatoes/ pasta sauce, Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat, Tinned vegetables, Tea/coffee, Tinned fruit, Biscuits, UHT milk, Fruit juice.

Thank you for all the pupils and staff who have already contributed.

19. **Christmas Jumper day Friday 11 December:** All pupils and staff are encouraged to wear a Christmas Jumper or something festive and bring a donation on Friday 11 th of December. We will be collecting for Save the Children and Bethany Christian Trust

20. **Pantomime:** S1 pupils will watch a pantomime streamed from the Brunton theatre on 11 Dec in their house groups.

21. **100 Top State Secondary Schools 2020**:
I am glad to report that St Thomas' is number 17 in the 100 top state schools in Scotland, having risen from 76 in 2019. Whilst we must celebrate this significant rise, I am conscious that St Thomas' is focussed on an holistic education for all our pupils. Congratulations to the entire community over the last 5 years in bringing St Thomas back to such a good ranking.

22. **2020-21 SQA summary update**: St Thomas' hopes to share with Parents and Pupils a draft 2021 January Higher and Advanced Higher prelim timetable this week now that we have been made aware of the Scottish Governments' decision regarding school holidays.

St Thomas' January prelim timetable will be slightly amended and will start on Friday 8 th of January and run until Tuesday 26 th of January. The National 5 assessment window dates are in draft form below and Ms Mariani hopes to share with pupils and parents a detailed schedule of when subjects will be assessing during these dates.

- Week beg 18/1
- Week beg 22/2
- Week beg 20/3
- Week beg 26/4
- Week beg 10/5

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 30 th November

Goodmorning to the Community of St Thomas. Please find the parental briefing for the week beginning Monday 30th of November.

23. **Health and Safety**: It is essential that all of the St Thomas' community follow the Scottish Government's direction

    If a pupil or staff member have any of the below symptoms, please stay at home, and follow the NHS guidance.

    - New continuous cough and/or
    - Fever/high temperature and/or
    - Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

    The St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety Team meet every **Monday Lesson 5** to ensure the H&S systems at St Thomas' are working for pupils, staff, and parents.

24. **Staffing**: A warm welcome back to Ms Patrick as Curricular Leader of Performing Arts and thanks to Mr Kennedy for his Acting Curricular Duties throughout October and November. I would like to congratulate Rosin Murray in her new position at Donaldson's school. Mrs Murray has been with us since the inception of the Learning Nurture Hub and has been a fantastic colleague to work with. On behalf of St Thomas' we wish Mrs Murray well and hope we can recruit a candidate with the skills and attributes to fill her place as Pupil Support Officer. Good luck to all colleagues for the Acting Pupil Support Leader interviews which will take place this week.

25. **2021-22 School Curriculum and Timetable**: Please find the 2020 November S2 Curriculum Presentation and 2021-22 Draft Course Choices on the school website at:

https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/

26. **S5-6 Full Reports**: S5 and S6 Reports will start on the Monday 23 rd of November and finish on Friday 4 th of December.
    S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7 th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December.
    S3 Parents' evening will take place on Thursday 14 th of January.

27. **Feast Day of St Andrews - Monday 30 th November**: Fr Samuel will lead the House gatherings along with the House Captains S6 Ilona Rankin and Afreen Latif.

- 10.40-10.55-**S1**
- 10.55-11.10-**S2**
- 11.10-11.25-**S3**
- 11.25-11.40-**S4**
- 11.40-11.55-**S5**
- 11.55-12.10-**S6**

28. **Food Collection for the Trussell Trust: Tuesday 1 December to Friday 11 December.** There will be a trolley at the school entrance for pupils to drop off their donations. Donations can include:

- Cereal
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Tinned tomatoes/ pasta sauce
- Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tea/coffe e
- Tinned fruit
- Biscuits
- UHT milk

- Fruit juice

29. **Christmas Jumper day Friday 11 December:** All pupils and staff are encouraged to wear a Christmas Jumper or something festive and bring a donation on Friday 11 th of December. We will be collecting for Save the Children and Bethany Christian Trust

30. **Parent Council**: The next parent Council will take place on MS Teams on Monday 30 th of November.

31. **2020-21 SQA summary update**: Please find attached Key dates for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2020–21 session.

    St Thomas' hopes to share with Parents and Pupils a draft 2021 January Higher and Advanced Higher prelim timetable this week. St Thomas' January prelim timetable will start on Wednesday 6 th of January (pupils first day back) and run until Friday 22 nd of January. The National 5 assessment window dates are in draft form below and Ms Mariani hopes to share with pupils and parents a detailed schedule of when subjects will be assessing during these dates.

- Week beg 18/1
- Week beg 22/2
- Week beg 20/3
- Week beg 26/4
- Week beg 10/5

Regards
Christopher Santini

Monday 23 rd November

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas'

Please find below the parental briefing for Monday 23 rd of November

32. **Health and Safety**: It is essential that all of the St Thomas' community follow the Scottish Government's direction

    If a pupil or staff member have any of the below symptoms, please stay at home, and follow the NHS guidance.

    - New continuous cough and/or
    - Fever/high temperature and/or
    - Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

    The St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety Team meet every **Monday Lesson 5** to ensure the H&S systems at St Thomas' are working for pupils, staff, and parents.

33. **2021-22 School Curriculum and Timetable**: Please find the 2020 November S2 Curriculum Presentation and 2021-22 Draft Course Choices on the school website at: https://www.st-thomas-of-aquins.org.uk/parents-carers/curriculum-for-excellence/course-choice/

34. **St Thomas' S2 pupils:** Congratulations to all of the S2 year group in raising £1334.25 for their Trade Fair charities: Show Racism the Red Card, Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home, Fresh Start, The Yard, The Hygiene Bank, Trussell Trust, Make a Wish Foundation, Teenage Cancer Trust, CCLASP.

35. **S5-6 Full Reports**: S5 and S6 Reports will start on the Monday 23 rd of November and finish on Friday 4 th of December.
    S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7 th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December.
    S3 Parents' evening will take place on Thursday 14 th of January.

36. **Water fountains**: I am glad to update parents that new "swan-necked" water fountains have been installed in St Thomas. These water fountains are for filing up water bottles and not to be drunk from directly.

37. **Parent Council**: The next parent Council will take place on MS Teams on Monday 30 th of November.
38. **2020-21 SQA summary update**: Arrangements for the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2020–21 session.

National 5 Maths Formal assessment: The **first** formal assessment for National 5 Maths will take place on Wednesday 9 December.
Paper 1: 9.40-10.30am and paper 2: 11.00-11.50am:
Pupils will only be expected to come into school on this day for the Maths assessment and we are asking that pupils arrive 10 minutes before the start of the first assessment. Pupils with assessment arrangements will be issued these instructions on an individual basis. As per our previous communication St Thomas' is still awaiting all subject information from the SQA and we will then issue a full National 5 formal assessment calendar to parents and pupils. However in the meantime we wanted to give you and your child as much advance notice as possible for the first formal assessment which has been scheduled before the end of term.

St Thomas' hopes to share with Parents and Pupils a draft 2021 January Higher and Advanced Higher prelim timetable by the 1 st of December. St Thomas' January prelim timetable will start on Wednesday 6 th of January (pupils first day back) and run until Friday 22 nd of January.

39. St. Thomas Family Quiz: WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY EVENING

All welcome to join our fun and friendly family quiz night, with a choice of either 7.30pm on Wednesday 25 th November or 7.30pm on Friday 27 th November. You can join in just for fun, or if you are feeling competitive enter your final score to win a prize! To join the quiz on Wednesday 25 th November please follow the link and use passcode 573269 (Meeting ID: 864
2007 5929)
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86420075929?pwd=NmFOUytGT3pzMEc4Ti9ETUdYRWdWZz09

To join the quiz on Friday 27th November please follow the link and use passcode 367659 (Meeting ID: 829 9488
1214)https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82994881214?pwd=NVJUL3VvRTlKMllTSEZvanpFdERxUT09

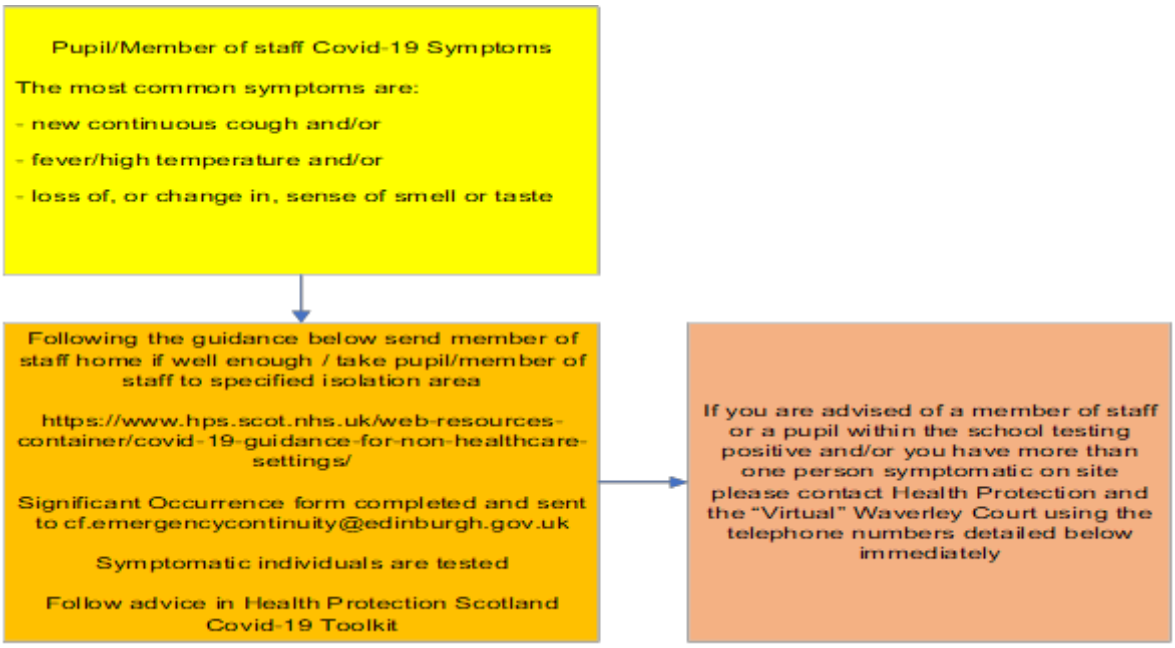
Please try to join 10 minutes early to allow time in case any problems arise. If you would like to make a donation, please visit our Just Giving web page – many thanks!
https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/2020-challenge

Looking forward to seeing you all there! St Thomas' Parent Council

40. Please find attached a 2021-24 City of Edinburgh Budget Engagement document.
Monday 16th November 2020

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas'. Please find the HT briefing for Monday 16 th of September

41. Health and Safety: Please follow the below Covid-19 guidance



The St Thomas of Aquin's Health and Safety Team meet every **Monday Lesson 5** to ensure the H&S systems at St Thomas' are working for pupils, staff, and parents.

42. **2021-22 School Timetable**: Please find the draft 2020-21 S2-S5 course choice sheets. All course choice sheets will be completed by early January 2021

43. **S5-6 Full Reports**: S5 and S6 Reports will start on the 23 rd of November and finish on Friday 4th of December.

44. **Parent Council**: The next parent Council will take place on MS Teams on Monday 30 th of November.

45. **St Margaret's House Assemblies:** There will be St Margaret's House Assemblies on Monday 16th of November to celebrate The Feast Day of St Margaret

46. **2020-21 Reporting calendar update:**

    S3 Parents' Evening will be moved to 14th of January and S1 Parents' Evening to Wednesday 5th of May (5-7pm).

    S4 Reporting will now consist of 4 Tracking Reports – Monday 25 th of January, Monday 22nd of February and Tuesday 20th of April. (A tracking report has already been issued for S4 pupils in September)

47. **2020-21 SQA summary update**: Arrangements for the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2020–21 session.

    SQA have started releasing guidance for National 5 subjects on a rolling basis until Thursday 19 November. SLT will work with the Curricular Leaders to establish a clear assessment calendar from December 2020 to communicate with parents and pupils when N5 assessments will be held for each subject area throughout the year.

There will be between 2-4 assessments per subject area (this will be in the guidance published by SQA). In order to ensure that we are not over assessing and keeping our pupils mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of our decision making. We will ensure that all communication regarding assessments is issued in advance and that pupils are very clear as to which assessments will contribute to the final grade being submitted to SQA by the centre. We will also ensure that pupils who require AA arrangements have these in place for all assessments.

We are still awaiting SQA key dates to inform us of when we will need to submit final grades but it will be in line with our assessment and Quality assurance/moderation calendars.

We will not be holding the traditional style prelim for N5 pupils but we will be taking the opportunity to deliver some N5 assessments during the January 'prelim' window. This will be in the assessment calendar in due course.

An update from the National Qualifications 2021 Group: A message on the Assessment Approach to National 5 - 11 November 2020

The National Qualifications 2021 Group is meeting weekly to consider qualifications arrangements in the 2020-21 session. This group draws its membership from the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Scottish Government. SQA is supporting National 5 certification by publishing subject specific guidance. In addition, SQA will also start to publish assessment resources this week. These resources include:

- SQA devised National 5 question papers and marking instructions that will be published on SQA's secure website
- Understanding Standards materials to reinforce practitioners' understanding of the national standard, including guidance on making grading decisions.

This additional package of support is intended to help teachers and lecturers in their understanding of the standards to be applied to assessment evidence, with a particular focus on gathering key pieces of evidence that have a high predictive value aligned to the required assessment components. The shared question papers are not intended for use as prelim exams. Focus should remain on the quality of the pieces of evidence (two to four depending on subject requirements) rather than the quantity - to ensure that we manage the assessment load for learners and to minimise workload for teachers. Given current public health advice and to maximise learning and teaching time, it is important to stress that there is no expectation that schools and colleges hold a formal diet of prelims for National 5. One of the key reasons for moving to an alternative model was to create additional teaching time through removing the need for prelims and replacing the final examination diet with more flexible classroom-based assessment. All assessment resources should be used flexibly within schools and colleges to assess candidates at key points in their learning. The subject specific

guidance will indicate the appropriate assessment conditions. Centres can adapt assessment approaches, such as splitting a question paper component, to fit delivery within class periods. SQA's generic guidance on gathering evidence for the purpose of estimation outlines that candidate evidence should be gathered at the later stages of their learning. Gathering and judging different types of key evidence from across the course, means that the estimates submitted by teachers and lecturers are more likely to be a realistic reflection of a candidate's attainment across the course. To stay up to date on 2021 National Qualifications visit www.sqa.org.uk/NQ2021

48. **St. Thomas' 2020 Challenge:** Thanks to all who have contributed to the 1,785km completed so far! That leaves only 235km to reach our target of 2020km. Please record your walk, run, bike and swim distances here https://forms.gle/psLGMmx7WVEG1KxJA and make a donation here https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/2020-challenge We've already raised £200 of our £500 target with funds going towards buying outdoor furniture for the school grounds, as well as other school equipment and activities. Well done for all the great support in taking on this challenge. St Thomas' Parent Council.

St. Thomas Family Quiz: All welcome to join our online quiz to be held on Wednesday 25th November and Friday 27th November between 7.30 and 8.30pm. You can join in just for fun or enter your score to win a prize. Fun for all the family! Donations made will go towards buying outdoor furniture for the school grounds, as well as other school equipment and activities. We look forward to seeing you online. St Thomas' Parent Council.