

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 Covid-19 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
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

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, listen 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-of-aquins.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

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 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-of-aquins.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

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-of-aquins.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

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/>

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- 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

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/>

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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/APRIL-2021-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 29 th	Tuesday 30 th	Wednesday 31 st	April 1 st	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	

- Staffing:** The part-time permanent Pupil Support Leader long-leet interviews will take place on Wednesday 31st March.
- 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-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/>

- 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.
- 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 22 nd	Tuesday 23 rd	Wednesday 24 th	Thursday 25 th	Friday 26 th
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

- 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.
- 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-of-aquins.org.uk/bulletin/head-teachers-bulletins/>

- 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/parents-carers/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-of-aquins.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 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. **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 2-metre 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-of-aquins.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-learning-opportunities/senior-phase-updates/> to find the Senior Phase Essential Practical Work Timetable for S4-S6 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-of-aquins.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/parents-carers/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 I pads to all school pupils <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/politics/council/council-tax-freeze-and-free-ipads-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

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-education-and-childrens-issues---advice-on-phased-return-to-in-person-learning-in-schools-and-early-learning-and-childcare-elc-settings/>
3. **Phased return to St Thomas:** An initial draft Timetable for S4-S6 pupils to return to school has been 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-of-aquins.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/online-learning-opportunities/>

- 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.
- 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-of-aquins.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.

- 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.
- Staffing:** I will be contacting all parents later on this week with an update on the Maths interviews conducted on Friday 22nd of January.
- 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
- SQA Parent guide:** Please find a SQA guide for parents which was prepared by CEC.
- Health and safety meeting:** Every Monday, St Thomas' Health and Safety team will meet virtually to ensure all Covid-19 protocols are in place.
- 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-for-excellence/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-for-excellence/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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths • CDT • PE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • History • Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Computing • Food and Textile technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • RE • Drama
S2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • RE • Drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths • CDT • PE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • History • Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Computing • Food and Textile technologies
S3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Computing • Practical • Cookery • Environmental Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • RE • Drama • Chemistry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths • Design and Manufacture • Graphic Communication • PE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Languages • Music • PSE • Modern Studies • Business Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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/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

Monday 14th of December

Goodmorning to the Parents of St Thomas', please find the briefing for Monday 14th 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 24th and 25th December.

From **Thursday 17th of December until Tuesday 22nd 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 22nd 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 13th and Thursday 14th of January 2021.

6. **Advent House gatherings:** During the week beginning Monday 14th, 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 18th of December.
S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7th 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 8th 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 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 7th of 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 13th and Thursday 14th 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.edinburghschools-kayak-club.com

15. Feast Day of St Andrew: Thanks to Mrs stark, The S6 House captains, and all staff for a great experience on Monday 30th of November.

16. Advent House gatherings: During the week beginning Monday 14th, 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 7th 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 11th 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 8th of January and run until Tuesday 26th 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 30th 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 23rd of November and finish on Friday 4th of December.
S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December.
S3 Parents' evening will take place on Thursday 14th of January.

27. Feast Day of St Andrews - Monday 30th 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/coffee
- 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 11th 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 30th 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 6th of January (pupils first day back) and run until Friday 22nd 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 23rd November

Goodmorning to the parents of St Thomas'

Please find below the parental briefing for Monday 23rd 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 23rd of November and finish on Friday 4th of December.
S1 and S3 Tracking reports will start on Monday 7th of December and finish on the Thursday 17th of December.
S3 Parents' evening will take place on Thursday 14th 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 filling 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 30th 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 1st of December. St Thomas' January prelim timetable will start on Wednesday 6th of January (pupils first day back) and run until Friday 22nd 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 25th November or 7.30pm on Friday 27th 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 25th November please follow the link and use passcode 573269 (Meeting ID: 864 2007 5929)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86420075929?pwd=NmFOUytGT3pzMEc4Ti9ETUdYRwdWZzO9>

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=NVJUL3VvRTIKMIITSEZvanpFdERxUTO9>

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>

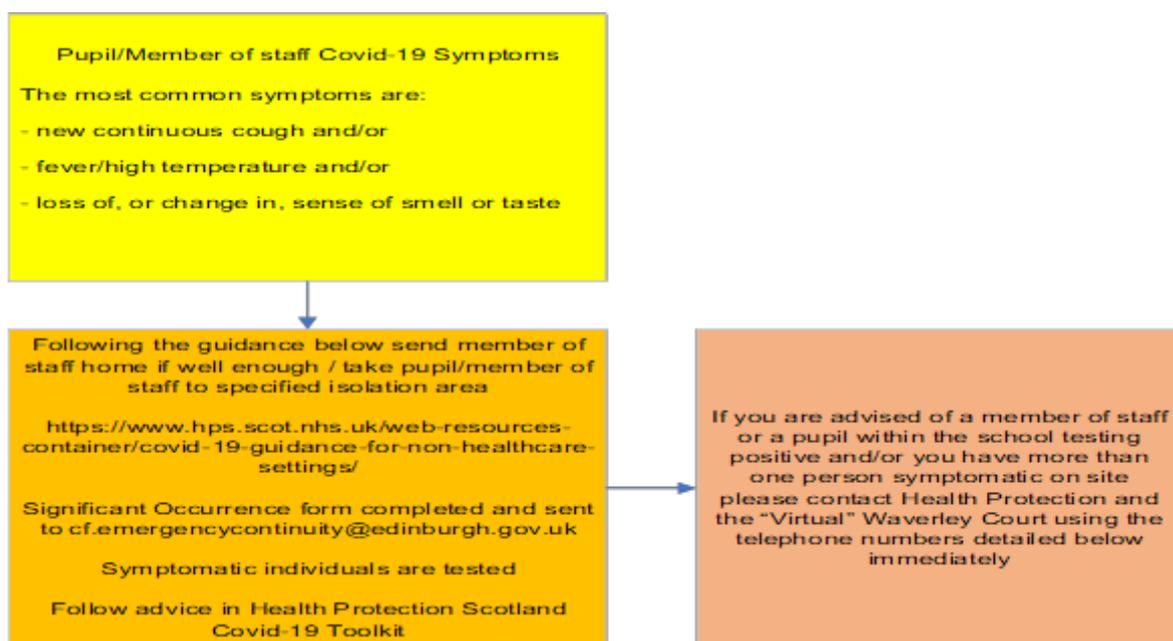
Looking forward to seeing you all there! St Thomas' Parent Council

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 16th 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 23rd of November and finish on Friday 4th of December.

44. Parent Council: The next parent Council will take place on MS Teams on Monday 30th 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 25th 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.