



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

1st September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

WELCOME BACK 2026-2027!

I do hope you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful summer holiday break and made the most of the time together to explore new places and experience new adventures! Whether you have jetted off to exotic destinations, explored locations within our wonderful British Isles or enjoyed a number of short breaks closer to home or days out, I hope you feel you have made the most of the time away from school and feel refreshed and ready for the beginning of the new academic year 2026-2027!

The end of the summer holidays can bring a range of emotions for both adults and children, from excitement for the adventures that lie ahead to anticipation for new challenges that await. It is also a time when a touch of worry may arise as everyone readjusts to the routines of school life. To address these aspects effectively, this letter aims to update and remind you ahead of the return to school on **Thursday 3rd September 2026**. Those of you who have children starting in EYFS/Reception will be aware of your slightly different phased return as previously communicated to you.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Structure

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

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

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

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Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9BX

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

Headteacher: Mr D. M. Moran



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Attendance & Punctuality

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is dedicated to supporting strong attendance for our children so that they receive an excellent education. The benefits of being in school are numerous. However, the pandemic disrupted attendance habits, and many schools including us are facing more challenges than ever in supporting children to be in school. We are working exceptionally hard in response to this challenge and it remains one of our key objectives in our School Development Plan 2026-2027.

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

Our whole school attendance target each year is **96+%**. Last academic year (2025-2026) we achieved only **94.0%** which is not good enough!!

At our recent Full Governing Body meeting, the Governors approved and ratified our updated **Pupil Attendance Policy** for September 2026. This is now available from the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and can be found via the homepage by clicking on 'Key Information' ➔ 'School Policies'.

In the new academic year 2026-2027, we will continue to work with **Aquinas School Attendance Provisions** who will be undertaking school visits each half term to track and monitor our attendance data and patterns. They will also be conducting face-to-face school-based attendance meetings with parents/carers of children who we deem to have concerns about their irregular school attendance. Aquinas will offer 'early help' support-based strategies to help improve poor absence rates, before exploring more legislative options including the issuing of penalty notices.

Primary School Main School Office

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

Arrival & End of School Day

The arrival for the start of the school day is **UNCHANGED**. Please continue to use the two designated entrances/exits off Sawyers Hall Lane when arriving for school. All parents/carers must use the one-way loop system to allow us to safely, quickly and efficiently get the children in to school and

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parents/carers off site to get on with your busy days! If you are an EYFS and/or KS1 parent/carer and need to gain access to the Main School Office, you will need to safely cross the car park and use the pedestrian pathway down to the office. Please be mindful of vehicles that may be moving in the staff car park and KS2 parents/carers who will be exiting the school premises.

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

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

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

Contact Details

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

 **01277 223651**

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

The school email address is:

 admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk

Parent Hub & Website

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

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

@stthomaspri

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

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

www.stthomaspri.org

REMINDER: School Dinners – September 2026

Following a meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee of the Governing Body of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School, a decision has been made to increase the daily cost of school meals from September 2026.

As you will be fully aware, the cost of food, fuel, transportation and catering staff pay continues to increase year on year. After carefully reviewing our catering trading accounts and factoring in these increased costs it has been decided that school meals will increase to **£2.77** per day (£13.85 a week) from September 2026.

For parents/carers of children in EYFS and Key Stage 1, this is for information only as your children will still be eligible for universal infant free school meals as set out by the Department for Education (DfE). However, for parents/carers of Year 2 children who have moved in to Key Stage 2 and for the rest of the Primary School parent/carer community this will impact on you from the beginning of this new academic year. However, if you think you may be eligible for benefits related free school meals then please read the eligibility criteria on the school website or visit the Essex County Council website or contact the school office for further details and support.

REMINDER: When we return to school on Thursday 3rd September 2026 we will be starting on **WEEK 1** of the menu cycle.

Premises Updates

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

To complicate matters further over the summer period the school was also 'commandeered' by Cadent following a burst water main in Sawyers Hall Lane that then subsequently flooded the gas main in the surrounding areas. This left a significant number of households in the area without gas for some time causing major disruption. St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School stepped up for the community to become the Cadent Community Hub, where their personnel were

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able to offer advice, guidance and support to local residents. We also became the main storage area for specialist equipment and acted as a central car park space for numerous Cadent gas engineers.

More exciting developments over the summer holiday have seen some beautiful graphic art work installed to the windows within the new walkway. These are to give Mrs Smith's classroom (Class 2 – Key Stage 2) a bit more privacy and to add a splash of colour and a sense of the outdoors to this enclosed area. At the same time it is a very visual reminder of our core Character Education values and celebrates our inclusive nature as a welcoming school for all.

The staff and I look forward to welcoming you back to St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School on Thursday 3rd September 2026 – don't be late!!

Yours sincerely,

Dean Moran
Headteacher

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