



St Thomas More Catholic
Primary School

Parent information booklet

Dear Families,

The wonderful community of St Thomas More Parish Primary School thanks you for your interest in our school.

Our school is an integral part of the community in which it serves and supports. The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere that is accepting of all people. As a Catholic school the Gospel values in which we believe can be seen in our classrooms and playground, there is no better example than our school mantra of caring for ourselves, others and our environment.

While our school community strives for academic excellence we also firmly believe we can make a difference to the lives of any student in our care. We do this by helping develop the intellectual, social, moral and spiritual needs of children.

The staff at St Thomas More School consists of a group of hard working, dedicated and passionate Teachers, Education Support Staff and Administration officers who all work together for the welfare of each child.

We view the education of children as a partnership between school and home. We take pride in our ability to welcome our parents into our school to help with the education of their children.

We hope then, that in partnership with, we can work together as you entrust your child's future education to the community of St Thomas More.

Kind Regards

Declan McDermott
Principal



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School E1228

Reynolds Lane, Belgrave

Phone (03) 9754 4444

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Email: principal@smbelgrave.catholic.edu.au

office@smbelgrave.catholic.edu.au

Principal	Mr Declan McDermott
Acting Deputy Principal	Danielle George
Office Managers	Mrs Tarnia Hiosan & Ms Ashleigh Van Soest
Parish Priest	Fr Anthony Cruz
Belgrave Parish House	17 Terrys Avenue, Belgrave
Phone (03) 9754 2141	Fax (03) 9754 4118

At St Thomas More we support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy including a commitment to the following:

- electing a government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech & association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

VISION STATEMENT

*Our faith in Jesus Christ
nurtures and empowers us to become a
just and dynamic learning community.*

MISSION STATEMENT

*We at St Thomas More Primary School – believe in Jesus Christ
and so strive to provide a learning community where the
whole person’s journey is recognised.*

School Hours

A teacher will be on yard duty to supervise the students in the schoolyard before school from 8:20am and after school until 3:30pm. It is the parents’ responsibility to care for their children outside of these times.

All students are to be in their classroom at 8:40am to prepare for the beginning of classes at 8:45am. Normal school finishing time is at 3:10pm

School Hours

8:20am	Yard supervision begins
8:30am	Classrooms open/Teachers in their room
8:40am	Students to be in their classroom
8:45am	Lessons begin
11:10am	Recess
11:30am	Lessons resume
1:10pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Lessons resume
3:00pm	Bus bell – Belgrave South & Cockatoo bus
3:10pm	Dismissal
3:30pm	Yard supervision ends

“This school community promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children”

Student Wellbeing and Values

St Thomas More has one of the most supportive and diverse Student Wellbeing programs available. We have a Schoolwide Positive Behaviors Framework including 'Play is the Way' - a play based program that teaches values and important life skills in a fun, engaging way. We also have a student leadership program that supports students to develop important skills that will help them for life. Our School Representative Council (SRC) runs all year, and this allows students to have a voice and help make important decisions for the school. We also have a range of Lunchtime Clubs for students to attend, these are mostly run by school staff however, some of our clubs are student led and run. Every Wednesday our school also hosts Bailey (trained Therapy Dog). Bailey remains in the school office area as a support for students who may be feeling anxious, worried, or as a reward. Students spending time with Bailey are always one or one (with an adult) or in a small supervised group. He is a very popular and calming member of our school community.

Child Safety

At St Thomas More we are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for every child. We have taken rigorous steps to ensure Child Safety continues to remain at the forefront of our everyday lives including that:

All staff, visitors and contractors that enter our school have read our child safety policies and code of conduct and must provide a valid Working With Children's Check.

Our students have a voice in regards to child safety by teaching and encouraging them to be proactive in our child safe practices.



Curriculum

Literacy

We offer a program that promotes skill development in reading and viewing, writing, speaking, and listening in a supportive and stimulating environment. Planning is based on the Victorian Curriculum and is evidence-based, supported by best practices around literacy acquisition. We are working towards having a knowledge-rich curriculum and explicit direct instruction across all year levels. At St Thomas More we strive for two-hour daily literacy blocks that are non-interrupted learning time for students in Prep to Year 6. Strong literacy skills are crucial for future academic success, while reading for pleasure is also extremely important. We want our students to love reading for enjoyment, improving social skills, mental health, and learning outcomes.

Our staff are trained in Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) teaching, this is an evidence-based learning approach that links reading, writing, and spelling.

Mathematics:

At St Thomas More the purpose of numeracy teaching is to enable students to value mathematics as an integral part of life and develop their ability to work mathematically through purposeful, engaging and challenging activities. We promote a positive attitude towards learning by developing students' understanding for applying mathematics effectively to become proficient problem solvers and to value the place of mathematics in our society. Students are encouraged to question and seek alternate strategies while taking risks in their learning to develop an enthusiastic and persistent approach. Students experience the use of hands-on materials, interactive games and technology to introduce and challenge their thinking and learning through mathematics. Teachers conduct formal and informal assessments to monitor and track the progression of each student to provide challenging and meaningful tasks. Students are taught effective communication of mathematical concepts, an understanding of mathematical literacy and the importance of using mathematics in everyday situations to become lifelong learners.



Religious Education:

We approach Religious Education using an integrated inquiry pedagogy in line with the Horizons of Hope Religious Education Curriculum Framework (developed by Catholic Education Melbourne). Religious Education at St Thomas More aims to help students grow as a faith filled people. We aim to build on the experiences of each student, enhance their opportunity for rich dialogue with others and allow them to form their own understandings and make deep connections with their faith.

St Thomas More Primary School Offers:

many opportunities for prayer, liturgy, meditation and celebration

an environment and atmosphere where the Gospel Values align with our behaviours and actions

a Religious Education program that is taught through an Inquiry approach, where connections to the real world and life experiences underpins the learning of our mission as Catholics

preparation and participation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation

opportunities to plan and undertake various social justice actions within our local and global community



Inquiry Based Learning:

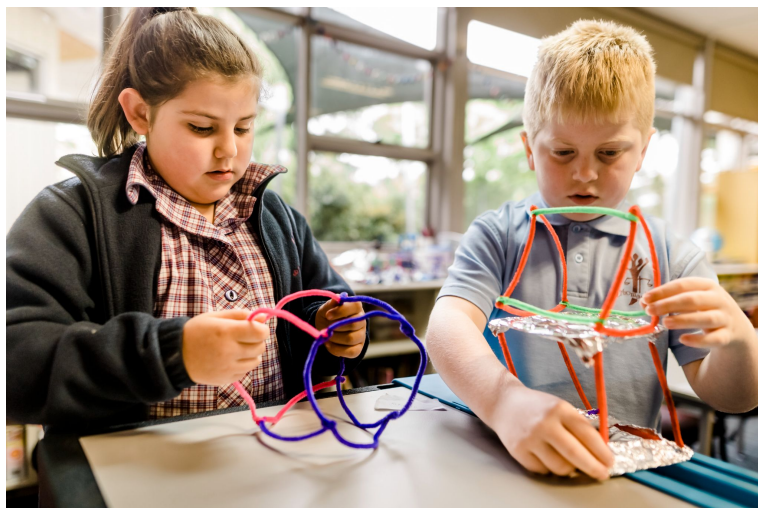
Inquiry Based Learning gives attention to identifying core knowledge, skills and understandings that are required to be successful in today's world. Core capacities such as higher order thinking, creativity, collaboration and the use of contemporary literacies are considered to be powerful learning opportunities for the contemporary learner.

At St Thomas More we believe that education should be about developing the whole child. As empowered and intrinsically motivated individuals, students develop the critical skills and understandings that will allow them to be successful, active participants in an ever-changing and increasingly global community.

Assessment and Reporting:

Assessment is both formative (informing our teaching) and summative (a summary of how student learning is progressing). Students are assessed at a number of points throughout their time at school and in each school year. Student feedback is most effective when it is timely, relevant, encouraging and offers suggestions for improvement.

We conduct learning conversations with parents and teachers (interviews) in February and June and written reports are provided in June and December. These written reports are based on the Victorian Curriculum which outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn during their time at school.



Extra Curricular Activities

Some of the most exciting times at Primary School are participating in the extra curricular aspects of school life. At St Thomas More, we offer a wide variety of non-classroom based activities including:

- Sports days (Athletics, Swimming, Inter-School Sports)
- Camps (3/4 and 5/6)
- Excursions and Incursions
- School Productions (biennial, our 2023 production was Peter Pan)
- Art Show/STEAM Show (biennial, will be scheduled for 2024)
- Math and Literacy game nights
- Lunchtime Clubs

Daily Lunchtime Clubs

Each day for half of lunchtime students are invited to participate in a different club. The options include: Gardening, Art and Craft, Relaxation, Music and Dance and Construction. Students are welcome to attend each club or choose between them. They can experience each club as often or as infrequently as they wish, it is that flexible.

School Garden and the Environment

Nestled in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges, St Thomas More encourages an understanding of, and care for, the environment in which we live. We have a school vegetable garden which will continue to be a strong focus. This is an ongoing project with plans for upgrades and expansions into the future. We are currently in the process of rejuvenating our Frog Bog, this is an exciting project in which our students will be engaged.



Weekly Specialists

Each week our students participate in the following specialist classes:

- Performing Arts
- Physical Education
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics)
- Japanese



Communication

With our hectic schedules these days, it's great to know that we have effective ways to communicate with each other. At St Thomas More, below are the main online methods used to communicate day to day events to families.

- Fortnightly Newsletters
- Operoo (for medical information, permission slips and announcements)
- School Interviews
- Website: <http://www.smbelgrave.catholic.edu.au>



You can also find our school on the following Social Media Platforms

- Facebook
- Facebook (closed parent group)
- Instagram (Public Page)
- Instagram (closed parent group)

Operoo

To ensure the school has 24 hour access to vital emergency contact and medical information about your child, St Thomas More uses an electronic system called Operoo (formerly Care Monkey). Operoo for Schools is a mobile health and safety solution that gives authorised teachers and carers instant access to important medical and emergency contact details when an incident occurs. Operoo makes life easier for families, teachers and administrators and is used by pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and Universities around the world.

All teachers have secure access to the Operoo website and secure access to the Operoo app. Student information is kept online and can be accessed from any device. Teachers have their devices with them at school, on camps and on excursions. Regularly throughout the year parents/guardians will be asked to update their child's Operoo profile for emergency procedures. Some of the details on Operoo may change from time to time and the responsibility for keeping student medical details up to date is with parents. Whenever emergency contact or medical details change parents must update Operoo profiles.

Medication

Annually every child will be issued with a Student Medical Form. Upon updating the information, families will be required to return the forms to the school so that any changes can be entered on each child's database. This is to occur at the beginning of each school year.

When students are carrying prescribed medication, to be administered during the day, the school will be notified in writing on the school Medical Authority Form by the parent/guardian, prior to staff administering medication. All medication is to be in the original container/packet to eliminate any discrepancies.

Parent Involvement

St Thomas More School Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Committee meets twice per term. The functions include assisting in the planning for the future and supporting the school in practical ways. Through the SAC, school and community relationships are developed and home school interaction encouraged. Parents are encouraged to contact any committee member with suggestions or concerns that can be raised at meetings. SAC members are asked to commit to a two-year term, with elections being held yearly for approximately half of the positions. The Committee consists of the Parish Priest, the Principal, teachers' representative, a representative of the Parents' and Friends Association and parent representatives.

St Thomas More Parents & Friends Association

The St Thomas More Parents & Friends Association provides an opportunity for parents to meet monthly and discuss various projects for the school, and arrange social events for the whole school community. The P & F also promotes social interaction by welcoming new families to the school, by organising fund-raising events, by assisting and supporting families in the school community in times of need.

Helping in the Classroom

Parent participation is valued and encouraged at St Thomas More and assistance is required in: writing, spelling, reading, special projects e.g. craft, cooking, excursions, library, photocopying, special sporting activities e.g. Interschool Sports.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Any person wanting to help in the school is required to read and sign the St Thomas More Child Safety Code of Conduct. They will also be required to have a valid WWCC. If you have any questions please contact the school office for more information.

Bus Service:

The Cockatoo Bus is managed by PTV. The service includes a drop off and/or pick up directly out the front of St Thomas More School. St Thomas More staff manage the afternoon pick up of students to ensure that they are safely on the bus. Families who are interested in more information about the Cockatoo Bus Service, please contact US Bus Lines (03) 9730 7651.

Students can also access the Public Bus to Belgrave South, this departs just after 3pm. Staff will once again assist students onto the bus.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) was introduced in 2015 and provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. An amount of \$125 per year will be paid for eligible primary school students. Payments go directly to the school and are tied to the student.

School Uniform:

The St Thomas More school uniform is listed below. All items are available through the online Spartan School World. All uniform items can be ordered through the following link. <https://www.spartanschoolworld.com.au/collections/st-thomas-more>

Full school uniform is to be worn everyday besides free dress days

Students can wear PE uniform on allocated days (to be communicated at the start of each year)

Summer	
Boys	Girls
School Hat (Terms 1&4) Light blue polo with logo Navy shorts Blue polar fleece (optional)	School Hat (Terms 1&4) Light blue polo with logo Navy shorts Blue polar fleece (optional) *Girls may choose to wear the Summer dress
Winter	
Boys	Girls
As above (with long navy trousers)	Navy winter tunic or long blue trousers

Note: The Parents and Friends kindly purchase hats to be gifted to each Prep student that enrolls at St Thomas More Primary School.



Before and After School Care

Before and after school care is available through Youth Leadership Victoria.

Make booking easier by signing up to the KINDY NOW app and selecting our centre.

Welcome to



YLV
Youth Leadership Victoria Inc.
OSHC

YLV - Daniel
0414 258 414

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