

20 October 2023

## Principal's Message

Term 4 has finally brought some sunshine which has dried out our field and allowed our students to utilise this great space. This week we had the exciting arrival of two new sets of football goal posts, which our senior students had requested, and already they are getting lots of use before, during and after school hours.



We are very busy with planning for 2024 and are currently working on developing a new class based science programme which will enhance the science teaching which takes place through the STEAM department. In recent times there has been some debate that students should have one hour of reading, one hour of writing and one hour of maths in a school day. It is important to note that in the primary school setting a lot of our teaching programmes are integrated. So when our students are working through the science aspect of the curriculum they are doing so through the lens of reading, writing and maths. This is the same for all areas of the curriculum which allows teachers and students to cover what is required while ensuring they are getting a range of different aspects of reading/writing/maths.

We have just signed a painting contract which will see a team of painters on our site at the end of this term. The main area for painting is the outside of the junior classrooms and we also expect builders to be on site replacing rotten and damaged wood in these areas before the painters arrive. This is the first part of a project for tidying up the junior area of the school and we will continue to carry out some minor work projects in this area during 2024.

Have a wonderful long weekend.

**Michael Maher**  
Principal



To Isaac Russell (Y6) and Zak Suppiah (Y8) for their High Distinction results in 2023 ICAS testing

### Upcoming Events

#### October

- 23 Labour Day Holiday
- 24 Board of Trustees Meeting (6.30pm staffroom)
- 25 Blake Organisation VR Visit (Y5)
- 27 Junior Assembly (M1 hosting)  
9.45am – 10.30am (school hall)  
Senior Assembly (S7&S8 hosting)  
11.45am – 12.30pm (school hall)
- 30 Visit from Bee Educator (Y3)
- 31 Y5&7 Road Patrol Training (for 2024)

#### November

- 01 PTA Secondhand Uniform Sale 2.45pm
- 01 Y7&8 Immunisations
- 02 ESOL Market Day
- 03 Trip to Youthtown (S1&S2)
- 07 Eastern Zone Touch (Y7&8)
- 07 Athletics Day (Y5&6)
- 08 Trip to Corban Art Estate (Y3)  
(M2PL, M2LU and half of M1)
- 08 Catch Up Immunisations (Y7&8)
- 09 Athletics Day (Y7&8)
- 09 Trip to Corban Art Estate (Y3)  
(M3RU, M3CL and half of M1)
- 10 Formal Assembly 11.45am – 12.30pm
- 14 Bay Suburbs Touch (Y5&6)
- 16 Kea Crossing Trip to Rainbows End (Y6)
- 17 Goat Island Trip (Y6)
- 17 Junior Assembly (STEAM hosting)  
9.45am – 10.30am (school hall)  
Senior Assembly (STEAM hosting)  
11.45am – 12.30pm (school hall)

**2024 Dates**

**Term 1**

Wednesday 31 January: Meet the teacher day  
Thursday 1 February: First day of Term 1  
Tuesday 6 February: Waitangi Day  
Friday 29 March to Tuesday 2 April: Easter Holiday  
Friday 12 April: Last day of Term 1

Thursday 25 April: ANZAC Day

**Term 2**

Monday 29 April: First day of Term 2  
Monday 3 June: King's Birthday  
Friday 28 June: Matariki Holiday  
Friday 5 July: Last day of Term 2

**Term 3**

Monday 22 July: First day of Term 3  
Friday 27 September: Last day of Term 3

**Term 4**

Monday 14 October: First day of Term 4  
Monday 28 October: Labour Day Holiday  
Friday 13 December: Prizegiving  
Monday 16 December: Last day of Term 4

## Science Van

The Science Van came to visit Year 1 this week. We learnt about bubbles and creating mixtures.



## 2024 Changes to our BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Programme

St Thomas's School's BYOD programme for students in Years 4-8 has been running for nearly 10 years now and our students have benefited in so many ways. BYOD ensures:

- Enhanced learning beyond the classroom walls, through the many possibilities technology enables.
- Seamless completion of learning between school and home including learning outside school hours.
- Access to learning and files even when offline.
- Personalised and self-paced learning.
- Digital skills and confidence that ensure college readiness.
- Access to e-books and a wider range of learning resources.
- Easier collaboration with peers.
- An additional method of communicating with teachers.
- Parents have greater visibility and control over their child's interactions online.
- Students are organised and responsible. They show respect for their own devices.
- Device familiarity – customisable to cater for a range of needs, always logged in so less wasted time.
- Students don't have to wait for a shared device to become free to complete their learning tasks.

**In 2024 ALL students in Years 5-8 will need to bring their own device to school each day.** Students in Year 4 are encouraged to bring their own device if they have one, but it is not compulsory at this year level.

To assist parents with selecting a suitable device, and to provide a range of options for financing devices, we have worked with The Warehouse Group to set up this website: [St Thomas's School BYOD Device Options](#)

Please note that BYOD devices can be purchased from anywhere, this is just a resource for those who would like to use it.

### More About our St Thomas's BYOD Programme

Our programme is flexible. Any internet capable device, be it a laptop or a Chromebook will be a huge advantage for your child. iPads/tablets can also be used, but we find these are difficult for writing and lack some of the features that make them suitable for all school related tasks.

The use of BYOD devices in class gradually increases from Year 4 to Year 8. By Year 7&8 our students are predominantly learning using devices so that they are well prepared for their college transition.

**From 2024 onwards, ALL students in Years 5-8 will need a device to participate in our BYOD programme.**

When selecting a device to provide your child, there are several things to take into consideration:

- Any device will be great - an old family laptop, a Chromebook, or even a high end convertible laptop like a Microsoft Surface Pro or similar. Let your budget dictate which option will work best for you. Keep in mind that technology changes at such a rapid rate that most devices are now becoming outdated after 3-4 years.
- Look into the device recommended by the college you intend to send your child to. If your child is in Years 6, 7 or 8 we suggest you make sure their device meets the needs of school they will next attend.
- St Thomas's School is dual platform. This means that we utilise both Office 365 and Google Suite. A Chromebook will only enable your child to use the web versions of both software types. This won't limit your child in any way, but it will mean that they can't work 'offline' for later syncing. A full laptop will give them the desktop functionality of Office 365 which means they can work offline and they can access more features that aren't contained in the web versions.
- Our Microsoft for Education licencing agreement means that all students have access to a free Office 365 account during their time at St Thomas's School. They can download Microsoft 365 onto their own device and use desktop versions of all the office software. This can save you quite a bit of money on purchasing software. Please note that 365 cannot be downloaded onto Chromebooks. Also note, that the 365 licence is for STS Students, using STS student email addresses only.
- The staff at retail stores are fantastic at recommending devices that will suit your budget and the purpose of BYOD. Take your time and use their knowledge to guide you in a direction that you are comfortable with.

We hope this information helps you with your decision about which device to purchase for your child's BYOD in 2024.



## **ICAS Results**

ICAS is an academic competition that challenges students and recognises their achievements in the core subjects of English, Maths, Writing, Science, Digital Technologies and Spelling. The competition was started over 40 years ago and has since become an internationally-recognised annual event completed across 41 countries. The questions are engaging, fun, and written in a way that is entirely different to regular school assessments, aiming to test students' higher-order thinking and problem-solving abilities.

St Thomas's School has offered the opportunity for students to participate in ICAS for many years and we are always proud of our students who give the tests a go and, of course, also those who show outstanding results.

This year, 45 students from Years 4-8 participated in ICAS. We would like to acknowledge the following students who achieved highly this year:

### **High Distinction**

Isaac Russell – Year 6 – Digital Technologies

Zakary Suppiah – Year 8 – English

### **Distinction**

Cherie Li – Year 4 – English

Reddington Chen – Year 4 – Science

Tommy Tran – Year 5 – Spelling

Ethan Suppiah – Year 6 – Digital Technologies

Isaac Russell – Year 6 – English

Isaac Russel – Year 6 – Maths

Isaac Russell – Year 6 – Writing

Cici Yu – Year 6 – Maths

Ethan Suppiah – Year 6 – Science

Selin Eser – Year 6 – Writing

Bonnie Tran – Year 8 – Maths

Bonnie Tran – Year 8 – Spelling

Zakary Suppiah – Year 8 – Maths

## **St Heliers Library Win with Words Competition**

Congratulations to two of our senior students who entered the 2023 St Heliers Library 'Win With Words' competition and received prizes for their work:

- Chloe Gonzales – Year 7 – 2nd Place for her story 'The Rosella and the Thrush'
- Lia Tommasi – Year 8 – 3rd Place for her story 'Bogg'

An amazing effort by both students.

## **Music Lessons Available Here at School**

Throughout the year, we have had a number of our talented students take advantage of the musical instrument lessons we offer. The Music Education Centre provides specialist tuition here at school which many parents find really convenient. It is not too late for your child to start learning an instrument in Term 4, so for more information about availability and instrument choices offered, please contact the Music Education Centre directly on 0800 89 39 39.

## Otago Maths Problem Challenge



Otago Maths Problem Challenge is a mathematics problem solving competition aimed at students in Year 7 and 8 which is organised by retired members of the Maths and Statistics Department at the University of Otago. Students have been completed five separate competitions. Each competition consisted of five questions to be completed in 30 minutes.

60 students from Year 7 and 8 participated in the competition. Students results in the top 10% receive a certificate of excellence, students in the next 25% receive certificates of merit.

<b><u>Students Receiving Merit</u></b>	<b><u>Students Receiving Excellence</u></b>
Year 7: Alex F, Chloe, Kirstin, Ethan, Tavish, Veronika, Joshua, Lora, Connor	Year 8: Timothy T, Cameron, Bonnie, Linda, Zak S
Year 8: Emma S, Amalya, Micah, Fumika, Tim R, Asher, Isaac, Franklin, Kaito, Yuna, Henry, Oliver S, Hayden	A huge congratulations to Zak S who gained a perfect score. His result is in the top 1% and he received a \$25 book token prize.

Zak, Bonnie, Linda and Cameron have been invited to enter the final challenge which is being held on Thursday 19 October. This final challenge consists of 10 multiple-choice questions, with five options per question, together with 10 questions that require explicit answers. The problems are similar in style to the usual Problem Challenge questions but generally much harder. The students will have one hour to attempt these questions.

## Year 2

The Year 2 students proudly display their hard work planting vegetables in the Learning Through Play garden.





## Year 3 Athletics Training



We have started our athletics training and teachers have been thoroughly impressed by the resilience and responsibility shown by the students. Ka pai Year 3! Our athletics activities includes high jump, sprints, hurdles, baton relays and shot put. Athletics promotes physical fitness, gross motor skills and importantly, builds self confidence and a sense of sportsmanship. We train for athletics each Friday so please make sure your child has their school hat and appropriate footwear.



## Visit to the AUT Forestry Research Site



Last week a group of students visited the AUT Forestry Research site in Pourewa Valley to investigate research being undertaken to determine how to restore forest ecosystems on marginal land.

Over 10,000 trees have been planted. Using technology, science, and Mātauranga Māori, the hope is that we can learn how to regenerate forests as quickly as possible.

Among other things, the research project is looking at the effect of fast growing smaller trees to provide shelter and shade to the big trees as they grow, and the effect of planting arrangements such as spacing, on the growth of trees. While there, we measured the height and diameter of tagged trees and undertook soil moisture readings. We also learnt how to tell if a fence is electrified, as well as learning how to read a map so we didn't get lost!

## **Year 5 Maritime Museum Trip**

On Thursday 12 October and Friday 13 October, Year 5 went to the Maritime Museum to learn about the Heroes of the Sea, as it is our topic this term. First we got on the bus into the city so we could get to the museum. Once we arrived we walked around to the entrance to our school trip room, which our educator called our HQ. Then the two classes split up; one went on the Ted Ashby sailing boat, while the other had their educator session.

Next, at the educator session, the educator pulled us down to the mat to tell us what we were going to do. Then we all went out the door to the dock and she told us about the waka hourua we were looking at. Then we went inside to the gallery and walked through a bunch of amazing exhibitions. Then we got to act out something we saw that was so fun. Then we met back at our HQ.

Meanwhile, the other class was aboard the Ted Ashby. We helped to put up the sail (we had to pass the rope along the line at about the speed of light!), then we were free to roam around the ship's deck. We even went under the harbor bridge, which was ultra cool because we could see people who were bungee jumping off it! Almost everyone was yelling, "JUMP! JUMP!" Then the ship turned around and sailed back to the dock.

After that, the two classes swapped what they were doing.

Afterwards, the classes explored the museum exhibitions in their allocated groups. There were lots of fab things to see, explore and do. Then we all met back in our Maritime Museum HQ. And then we sadly had to pack up and leave, but we had so much fun!!



Thank you to the Year 5 teachers for organizing this fab trip; it was the best trip EVER in the history of trips!!

Written by *Anise, Annaliese, Mayra, Mia and Tallulah - Y5 M6*

## **Stopping Traffic at the School Gate**

Traffic at the school gate is a potential danger. Our school is part of the TravelWise programme and is working towards creating a safe culture for everyone getting to and from school.

For the safety of your child and their friends:

- Always observe all parking and drop off zone restrictions near our school.
- Always use the school patrol crossing.
- Choose safety over convenience at all times.
- Where possible walk or join a Walking School Bus with your child. Email [asnell@stthomas.school.nz](mailto:asnell@stthomas.school.nz) for further details.





### **Kindo now offers Online EFTPOS for school payments**

You can now enjoy using online EFTPOS with the following banks when making payments on your mykindo account- ANZ, ASB, BNZ, Co-operative Bank and Westpac. Check out the [support page](#) for more information.

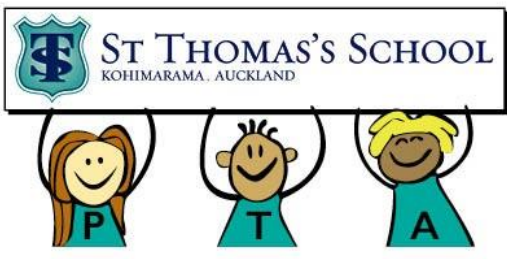
### **If you don't bank with one of the above banks**

The Online EFTPOS team are currently working to bring on other banks.

They will happily pass on your feedback if you drop them an email at [oesupport@paymark.co.nz](mailto:oesupport@paymark.co.nz), to let them know who you bank with and how much you'd love to see Online EFTPOS! If you feel generous to contact your bank directly, it'll help them even more.







# PTA News

## Issue #15 2023

### Watch out for Up-coming Events in Term 4:

- **Second-Hand Uniform Sale** – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November  
Location and time to be confirmed on Hero next week
- **St Thomas's School Colour Run** – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November  
St Thomas's School Field  
\$22 early bird ticket if booked before 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct  
\$25 full price ends 30<sup>th</sup> Oct  
Included in ticket price – Entry, white t-shirt & ice block  
Book through Kindo now!
- **Christmas CookieTime Fundraiser** - November  
2L CookieTime Bucket - \$20 or 1L Gluten Free CookieTime Bucket - \$18  
All orders to be placed before 17<sup>th</sup> November for December delivery  
Keep an eye out on Hero next week to place your orders
- **Christmas Hams & Turkeys** – November  
Prices yet to be confirmed and can be ordered in November through Kindo  
Pick up from Saint Johns Butchery before Christmas
- **Year 8 Leaving Dinner** – December  
More details to come...



**SAINT JOHN'S BUTCHERY**



### Reminders

#### Second Hand Uniforms:

Donate your preloved uniform for us to on-sell. Please drop off at the office



Why not consider joining the PTA in 2024? It's fun, rewarding and most of all, benefits the school and our Tamariki. Contact us on the email below or come along to our next monthly meeting to find out what we do. Next meeting **7pm Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, in the school staffroom.**

We encourage you to contact us with your thoughts & suggestions any time at [stthomasschoolpta@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasschoolpta@gmail.com) and don't forget to Like us on Facebook!



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