



09 February 2024

Principal's Message

Welcome back to returning students and whānau, and a warm welcome to those joining our school for the first time in 2024. On Friday 16 February we are having our annual school picnic from 4.30pm to 7.30pm. I am looking forward to meeting everyone. This is an awesome family event and a good way to meet other parents in our school community.

We have had a busy time improving the school over the term break. The exterior of all our junior classrooms were painted and are now looking very smart. Major work was carried out on our entrance as you can see in the pictures on the next page. A stone wall and planting were put in place to provide a more appropriate entrance to the office area. Stainless steel handrails were modified to make them safer for our smaller students and a shelter was erected alongside our classrooms.

These modifications will change how students enter and leave the school. Students will no longer congregate around the entrance steps which will allow parents to freely enter the office area. If students arrive before school opens at 8:15am or are waiting for parents in the afternoon, they will wait under the shelter. Students will not be allowed to sit on the stone wall and we ask parents not to let little children walk or sit on the wall if you are waiting to enter the school in the afternoon.

Astro Turf Reconstruction

Due to sink holes appearing in our astro turf after the cyclone last year, extensive modification work was undertaken over the term break. This included ripping up the existing turf and reinstating new drainage and base courses. An enormous amount of hard fill has gone into the base to future proof it from potential storm damage and we have taken this opportunity to extend the courts by 7 metres which will provide our students with 1300 square metres of all-weather playing area when complete. This area will also be fully fenced by a 2.4 metre perimeter fence to help maintain the integrity of the surface area and prevent balls from leaving the area and injuring passing students. We are now awaiting the arrival of the artificial turf, which is expected in late March, to complete the project.

Michael Maher
Principal



Well Done to our fantastic contractors who have completed the painting and new entrance area.

Upcoming Dates

February

- 16 PTA Picnic 4.30pm – 7.30pm
- 20 Board of Trustees Meeting (6.30pm staffroom)
- 21-23 Y6 Camp – Carey Park
- 22 Y5 Mangere Mountain Trip (S7&S8)
- 22 Y7 Auckland Botanic Garden Trip
- 23 Y5 Mangere Mountain Trip (M6)
- 23 Y8 Auckland Botanic Garden Trip

March

- 01 Y4 Zoo Trip
- 05 Y7&8 Immunisations
- 07 Y5-8 Swimming Sports (Sacred Heart College)
- 08 Y7 Youthtown Trip
- 08 Junior Assembly (J5&J6 hosting) 9.45am – 10.30am (school hall)
- Senior Assembly (S9&S10 hosting) 11.45am – 12.30pm (school hall)
- 12 Y7&8 Immunisations (catch ups)
- 15 Bay Suburbs Swimming
- 19 Board of Trustees Meeting (6.30pm staffroom)
- 22 Y7 Youthtown Trip
- 27 Y7 Youthtown Trip
- 28 Last Day before Easter Holiday
- 28 Junior Assembly (M3 hosting) 9.45am – 10.30am (school hall)
- Senior Assembly (S7&S8 hosting) 11.45am – 12.30pm (school hall)



Front Entrance



Astro Turf under construction

Whānau Friday

On Fridays, whānau are welcomed onto the school site in the morning while our school gates are open. You can use this time to explore your child's classroom with them, look at work they have been doing or have a quick chat with their classroom teacher and other parents.

We request that all parents leave the school site before the 8.55am bell goes, so that we can begin our teaching and learning programme. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, parents drop off their children at the school gate. This helps with traffic flow outside the school and builds resilient and independent students.

School Traffic and Gate Times

For a large school, we have only a very small road frontage area available for drop-offs and pick-ups. To ensure the health and safety of all our students, we rely on the support of our community to adhere to the following:

- Our school gates open at 8.15am. Students should not arrive at school before this time. Gates are locked again at 8.55am. Any student arriving after this time must sign in as late at the office before heading to their classroom.
- The area painted with bright yellow cross-hatching and 'No Parking' outside our staff car park entrance should not be used for parking or drop-offs at any time. If no spaces are available in the pull-in bays, please continue down Allum Street to find the nearest safe (and legal) park.
- Between 8.30am and 9.00am our school bus bay must be kept clear. This is the pull-in parking bay on Allum Street directly outside our school hall. If parents use this bay for parking and/or drop offs, we do not have a safe place for students to alight the bus.
- Our school gates open at 2.55pm and parents may come on site to collect their children from school if they wish. Gates are locked again at 3.30pm to allow our teachers uninterrupted time to meet and prepare for the following day's teaching and learning. Please note: outside of school hours, staff are not available to supervise students on the playground or provide first aid. For this reason, we request that all parents and students leave the site by 3.30pm when the gates close.
- Students should be collected promptly from school after 3pm. We have a large number of students who wait, unsupervised, for parents to collect them from outside our school office. This is a health and safety risk and we request that parents minimise this waiting time as much as possible.
- Please do not u-turn or pull into driveways to turn around in the immediate vicinity of the school. Instead, continue down Allum Street and exit the area via another, safer, road option.
- Do not cross Allum Street with your children or instruct your children to cross Allum Street at any point other than one of our two supervised pedestrian crossings.
- Please keep your time in the drop-off and pick-up bays to a minimum so that these can be used by numerous parents – if you want to walk your child to the gate, please park further down the road and walk them up.

Reporting Student Absences

We would like to remind all parents/caregivers that reporting absences is important for the safety and wellbeing of students.

We aim to deal with all unexplained absences as quickly as possible each morning.

To minimise the number of unexplained absences, it is helpful if parents/caregivers take a few moments to advise the school of an absence **by 9.00am** in one the following ways:

- Through our Hero App (preferred)
- By telephone 09 5283938

It is not necessary to email the class teacher.

Absences must be reported each day unless the office has been advised in advance of the duration of an absence. You must state the reason for absence i.e. sick, doctor's appointment, holiday or bereavement.

Our gate is locked at 8.55am and we do have a lot of students arriving 5 minutes late. Please note, the school roll is taken at 8.55am ready to start the learning programme at 9.00am. While we may try several alternative phone numbers to contact a parent, if calls are not answered, where possible we will leave a voice message. If your phone numbers change, whether it is a work, home or mobile number, can you please advise the office.

Any students arriving late to school must report to the office and sign in, so that their safe arrival can be recorded. All late arrivals are recorded, should your child be late on a regular basis follow up action will be taken.

Should you wish to collect your child early from school, please come to the office and sign your child out. We do not let your children go home with someone that is not on the child's record card. Students cannot be signed out during morning break or lunchtime so if they have an appointment, please pick them up before morning break (10.30am – 10.50am) and lunch (12.30pm – 1.30pm).

If your child is unwell during the school day, they should go to sick bay. They must **not** phone or text their parents/caregivers themselves.

Thank you to all our parents for helping to build resilience in our young students by saying goodbye to them outside the gate and letting them walk into school on their own.

Suncare Policy

It is compulsory for all children to wear the St Thomas's School hat during Terms 1 and 4 whenever they are outdoors. We ask for your support in ensuring your child brings their hat to school every day during these terms. Hats can be purchased from the school office. Please clearly name the hat so if mislaid it can be returned to the student.

Sunscreen is to be applied at home before coming to school. Sunscreen will not be supplied by the school. If sunscreen needs to be re-applied during the day, students must do this themselves from their own supply.



2024 BYOD Programme

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

To assist parents with selecting a suitable device 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 one option.

More About our St Thomas's BYOD Programme

Our programme is flexible. Any internet capable laptop will be a huge advantage for your child. iPads/tablets can 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.

Incredible Years Parenting Programme

There is a Ministry of Education parenting programme called Incredible Years. Book into a local programme near you. For more information, please see their [website](#).

Update on the Gowing Drive Walking and Cycling Connection - New Design

We welcome the release of designs for the Meadowbank's new Gowing Drive walking and cycling connection which brings this eagerly awaited shared path a step closer to construction.

The Gowing Drive link is the final stage of the Meadowbank to Kohimarama Connections project and will expand the existing local network of cycleways and walkways. Built on vacant land at 92 Gowing Drive, it will be separated from the road to create safer and more sustainable travel choices for those wanting to ride, walk or run to and from local schools and the city centre and around the Eastern Suburbs.



The design features an underpass under the Eastern rail line, with a connecting boardwalk to Te Ara ki Uta ki Tai (also known as the Glen Innes to Tamaki Shared Path) on one side, and a retained pathway and boardwalk on the other side that curves gently up the hill to exit onto Gowing Drive. While focusing on safety for all users and protecting privacy for neighbouring properties. Landscaping and surface artworks will also make it an attractive community asset.

Want to know more?

For more information and to view the designs, please visit the Meadowbank to Kohimarama Connections project page on Auckland Transport's website at <https://at.govt.nz/about-us/have-your-say/central-auckland-consultations/meadowbank-to-kohimarama-connections>

Just Scootering

Wednesday lunchtimes at St Thomas's School.

Casual Session: \$30

Full Term: \$25 per session

BYO scooter

For more information call Anna on 027 457 7918



St Thomas's
Scooter School



Lunchtime Programme

2024

PTA School Picnic

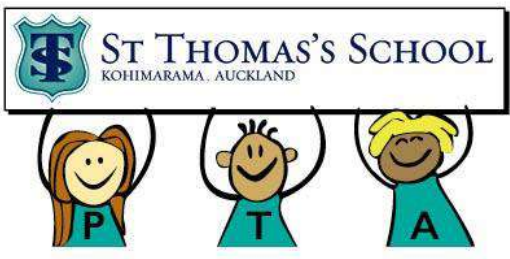
Next Friday, 16 February, will be our annual School Picnic. Please come and join us on the field between 4:30 and 7:30pm for an afternoon of fun and frivolity! You can purchase food from the following stalls:

- Mr. Whippy
- Paella Pan
- Captain Crepes
- Pioneer Pies
- Sausage Sizzle
- Pizza
- Chips, lollies & drinks

or BYO. We'll also be selling pre-loved school uniforms.

There will tickets on sale for loads of great rides; Bouncy Inflatables, the Laughing Clowns and Sammy the Trackless Train and a host of games and activities for the kids to enjoy. Kelly Club will also be joining us.

This is a chance to meet some other members of your school whānau in a relaxed and fun environment. We look forward to seeing you there!



PTA News

Issue #19 2024

Welcome Back to a New School Year!

Welcome to a start of an exciting new school year to all our new and seasoned parents. We hope the students are settling in nicely .

The PTA is all go with organising another fabulous year of fundraising for our lovely school and we need your help. If you wish to join the PTA or would like to know about becoming Friends of the PTA (FOPTA), please get in-touch (email provided below). We would love to hear from you. Why join the PTA.....



- **Our Children Benefit**

You show your children engagement in their school and gives them a sense of pride knowing their parents have contributed to the school fundraising goals.

- **The School Benefits.**

PTA plays a vital role in supporting the school by facilitating communication, organising events, fundraising, coordinating volunteers. Funds raised are used to purchase educational materials, improve facilities, support extracurricular activities, or fund special projects that may otherwise be unaffordable for the school.

- **Make Connections**

Get to know teachers, staff and other parents and hear first-hand what's happening in the school.

- **You Benefit**

The PTA fosters a sense of community and collaboration among parents, teachers, and staff members. We organise social events, family nights and being part of the PTA provides a sense of achievement in reaching the goals set for the year.

Ready to sign up? Click the link below and provide your name and contact number

stthomasschoolpta@gmail.com

WATCH OUT FOR UPCOMING EVENTS IN TERM 1:

- **Ice Block Fridays** - every Friday (weather permitting) \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Under the tree next to the school office.
- **School Family Fun Day Picnic** - Friday 16th February 4.30pm-7.30pm on the school field.
- **Second-hand Uniform Sale** - At the school Picnic (get organised for winter uniforms)
- **Colour Run** - Date to be confirmed



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 **Wednesday 14th February.**

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



Facebook/StThomasSchoolPTA



FUN PROGRAMMES
THAT KIDS LOVE!

YOUR KIDS' HOME AWAY FROM HOME!

**OUR PROGRAMMES ARE PACKED WITH
EXCITING ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO NURTURE,
EDUCATE AND INSPIRE YOUR KIDS.**

SPORTS

COOKING

ART

SCIENCE

+ MORE!

At Kelly Club, we offer quality before- and after-school care in safe and supportive surroundings, with programmes that are tailored to your kids' ages and skill levels. Our dedicated and passionate staff are fully trained in all aspects of looking after your children.



**OSCAR
PROGRAMME
SUBSIDIES
AVAILABLE!**

**Conditions apply*

Check out our wide range of activities,
easy online booking system, flexible payment options
and childcare subsidy information at:

www.kellyclub.co.nz

MUSIC LESSONS

AT SCHOOL!

The Music Education Centre offers specialist music tuition for a range of instruments including Piano, Guitar, Drums and more!

IT'S CONVENIENT!

Have your child's music lesson right at their school and give them the opportunity to develop their skills through our **individualised lessons that're both fun and educational!** Learning **music supports all areas of learning** through **developing confidence, creativity, concentration and so much more!**

To enrol, please visit www.bit.ly/MECPRIMARY